

A portrait of Gaspard de Uffhofen, a Swiss Reformed theologian. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a dark, flat cap and a dark, fur-lined garment. He has a serious expression, looking slightly to the right. The background is a dark, textured brown.

Gaspard de Uffhofen

CONTRA
CALVITIUS

A critical view of Calvinism

Assailly Publishing

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Introduction

Calvin took up the Lutheran concept of predestination by pushing it to the the absolute, as we are going to see it at first. But above all, his doctrine is characterized by the rejection of works as an instrument of salvation.

His approach is, there also, purely rational. Since God created everything, our good works do not result from our will, but from divine grace alone. It would be absurd to rely on it. Moreover, the most elementary humility must lead us to believe that we are indebted to God for everything. But regarding good works, Calvin's doctrine comes up against an infinitely deeper problem. How can we claim to judge for ourselves the value of our works? How is it possible to think that our acts can please God? We can only offer them by praying that they will agree Him! The problem of the utility of our good works for our salvation disappears entirely behind the question of their value. The progressives come to the idea that there are good works, social works, which please inevitably God. And of course, the progressive is humble-minded, and like Calvin, he does not require that his good works be imputed to him personally. Unlike Calvin, he does not attribute them to God, but to Society, or at least to those who concur with him in reforming the Society.

Calvin's vision is purely rationalist. He attributes to God a thought according to human logic. Thus, God completes by degrees the work of our salvation, and here are the degrees of mercy. Calvin quotes St. Paul: "And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also

justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” (Rom. 8-30). This idea of degrees is an approach specifically linked to human logic. It is absurd to attribute an approach to God, how much it would conform to the logic which is the way of functioning of the human mind. All heresies rest, as we have seen, on human visions of divine mysteries such as Creation, the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy Trinity. It is, from the beginning, the drama of rationalism. Long before this word was used, men tried to connect these mysteries with human logic. Today, this shortened vision of the divine world is rejected. Nevertheless, the progressive approach is itself a new rationalist attempt, an intellectual approach that is intended to be logical. They defend themselves from it. They are in denial as well.

More dramatically, Calvin takes up the thesis of Luther's predestination, but almost absolutely. This predestination would result from the universal knowledge of God. God would know the totality of the Universe from its creation until its disappearance at the end of time. This total knowledge implies that he knows in advance which men will be saved. These, in the mind of Calvin and Luther, are therefore predestined by God to be saved.

It is here again to attribute to God a thought in line with human logic. The very idea of universal knowledge is an extension of the human knowledge of the world. Calvin thinks that God reasons like man and must have a knowledge of the universe of the same order as that gives to us the scientific knowledge. This knowledge is only extended to the totality of the duration of the Universe. This extension might seem suitable to a being which would be superior to us by the extent of knowledge and not by nature. God would have a knowledge of the Universe similar to that which we acquire progressively through experiment and reasoning. This extension is certainly beyond human possibilities, but it remains based on the way of knowledge of man. God is far beyond this rationalist vision. One can attribute to God neither a

human thought, nor even a human way of thinking. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55: 8-13).

Time itself is the means for the human mind to understand motion. Man thinks according to a time spread out from infinitely past to infinitely future, whereas experiment gives him access only to the present moment. In the same way, man's mind conceives the motion, and additionally the existence, in space. To think that God can think on the basis of these same concepts is an anthropomorphism. The human thought of eternity attributed to God is also an extension of the concepts of our mind. God is far beyond these determinations, even extended to infinity. God has need neither of time nor space. He completely escapes all the concepts in which man would want to confine Him by merely extending these concepts to what man imagines under the word "infinite".

The purely rationalist view consists in attributing to God a human way of thinking. This led Calvin to think that the human condition would be predestined. In the absence of references in the Old Testament, Calvin relied essentially on St. Paul and St. Augustine. The people of Israel are the chosen ones of God, but this does not give rise to any individual predestination as in Calvin. Throughout the Old Testament, we do not count the damned, though Jews. There is no predestination in the Old Testament. It is a pure production of rationalism born in the fifteenth century.

Relying on passages from the letters of St. Paul, Calvin thought he would find confirmation of his rationalist point of view: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might

be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” (Romans 8: 28-30).

We can also quote: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to God’s holy people in Ephesus,[a] the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.” (Ephesians 1: 1-6).

The great Greek theologians seem to have adopted rather generally the position taken up by the rationalists. This is the famous controversy post “*prævisa merita*” against “*ante prævisa merita*”. The idea of predestination rests on the divine universal prescience. Now the very idea of prescience is an anthropomorphism. It is the idea that God would have a knowledge of the world of the same nature as human knowledge, a scientific knowledge.

The Apostolic Fathers took a less clear-cut position. This is the case first of the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. Salvation rests on an initiative of divine mercy. But we can not obtain this salvation without the concurrence of our works. We are already the antipodes of Calvinism. But the third proposition of St. Clement truly illuminates the texts of St. Paul: virtuous works are themselves a gift of God. Just as Freewill is a gift from God, our good works are only possible through a gift from God. St. Clement thus finds himself in total opposition to Calvin's rationalist thesis. The recognition of the gifts of God leaves all its grandeur, so to speak, to the divine mystery, and also to the mystery

of man. For the divine gift implies the possibility of access to the gift. Man receives divine gifts through faith which itself is a gift.

One could say that there is a rational basis in this approach. The point of departure, the gift, is not a fact of reason. But the consequences, in the actions of men in particular, are due to the use of reason, but also to our physical faculties, since thoughts must be converted into acts, would it be only the prayer.

Rationalism is not only measured by the use of human logic. The problem is the starting point. There is no science without premises, principles or postulates stated a priori. We must start somewhere! The drama of Calvin is to attribute to God thoughts according to the human way of thinking. By resting his reasoning on the free gift of God, St. Clement leaves to God and man all their mystery. The gap is in the starting point. St. Clement starts from the possibility of God's gift to man. Calvin starts from the possibility of divine prescience, and therefore of the possibility of a scientific knowledge by God.

For St. Augustine: "The mystery of predestination is reduced to this: 1. By his omnipotent grace, God restores the freedom of man, who because of sin is evil de facto, capable of meritorious works; 2. By a permission suggested by his secret judgments, God, in certain cases, leaves the liberty of man, in fact, bad. The mystery is therefore that of the divine election: ex massa perditionis. It is a mystery of justice and goodness" (Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique III-I- 3-1-1b © Letouzey et Ané).

The position of St. Augustine, repeated on several occasions in his writings, was the object of many debates during his lifetime. By relying ultimately on the mystery of the divine gift, he takes up the thesis of St. Clement. It is the most beautiful interpretation of the texts of St. Paul. It operates the perfect link with the necessity of the works evoked without ambiguity by the Epistle of St. James (2: 14-20): "What good is it, my

brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, Go in peace; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?" (St James 2: 14-20)

On the contrary, this can be seen as a justification of the progressives' position. Faith: of course, but only works. The second commandment would suffice for itself since it is identical with the first. The liturgy? What for?

Calvin's rational vision of predestination and his negation of Freewill contrasts with his vision of God. It is inspired by a completely different approach. Curiously, this approach is the opposite of rationalism. From a philosophical point of view, the sovereign good emanates from God. God is therefore goodness itself. Deus is caritas. Thinking that God can harm men is thus an unfathomable philosophical contradiction. God can only want good. These are the very words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "Amor Dei is cause bonitatis rerum." It must also be remarked that the verb "to want" attributed to God keeps something human from which He is certainly and absolutely very far. Just as curiously, Calvin support the avenging and aggressive nature of God, but without any reference. He is the God of the Old Testament. The idea is so prevalent in the Old Testament that Calvin probably did not have the thought that it could be otherwise.

Moreover, even St Paul sometimes takes up this conception of God: "For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have

mercy on them all.” (Rom 11-29-36). To do evil to do good is certainly a position fully contrary to the Gospel. I imagine that St. Paul addressed essentially to converted Jews and was influenced by his Hebrew education. Moreover, he was always marked by the position of the Old Testament with regard to women. He only quotes the name of Mary once (Rom 16: 6), but he is not the mother of the Lord. On the other hand, St. Paul's position on predestination can not be based on the Old Testament, where it simply does not exist.

The texts of St. Paul are one of the great justifications used by Calvin in favor of predestination. St. Clement has shown that predestination without Freewill is in fact an utterly erroneous interpretation of the letters of St. Paul. God has given everything, even the being itself, but above all good, essentially charitable works. There is a contradiction between Freewill and predestination only in human reason. Science, the knowledge of the world by man, is besides purely causal. How can a necessarily deterministic Universe be reconciled with Freewill? This is obviously impossible. The negation of Freewill is the most characteristic aspect of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin. But, our knowledge of the Universe is limited by origin, the Creation. It is a mystery, for the philosopher necessarily, but also for the scientist, even if he refuses this limitation of knowledge.

Creation is a mystery. The Freewill a gift.

After this general introduction we shall enter into the master work of Calvin. The objective is to show where a purely rationalist vision has led. To tell the truth, we already knew: to Positivism and to atheist materialism. It is not surprising that most positivists are of Protestant origin. One could oppose the Catholic origin of Auguste Comte. It would be forgotten that he left this religion, still adolescent, under the influence of Daniel Encontre, his professor of mathematics, belonging to a family of Protestant pastors. Following him, we can cite the

philosophers Hippolyte Taine, Émile Littré, sociologist Max Weber, psychologist, William James, mathematician Henri Poincaré, polytechnicien as Comte. Of all the band, Pierre Duhem is the only one who has dared to affirm a profound truth: "The Catholic religion promotes scientific progress". For this progress obviously did not wait for the sixteenth century and the arrival of Luther and Calvin. From point of view of Duhem, "Physics proceeds by an autonomous method, absolutely independent of any metaphysical opinion." One sees that it placed deep limits on the absolute ambitions of Comte towards the total knowledge of the Universe. In other words, he would have rejected without hesitation the relativistic myth of the unification of forces in view of the final explanation.

Chapter premier

The Treaty of the justification, extracted from the Institution of the Christian Religion (translated by R.C. Sproul, this book exists only in French)

Calvin's position rests on interpretations of a number of passages from the letters of St. Paul, often quoted by St. Augustine.

Let us begin with the problem of the Law: "man's only resource for escaping from the curse of the law, and recovering salvation, lies in faith" (sect. 1). "The cause of the rejection of the Jews to have been, that they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (sect. 13 quoting Rom. 10-3). "Hence it follows, that so long as the minutes portion of our own righteousness remains, we have still some ground for boasting. Now if faith utterly excludes boasting, the righteousness of works cannot in any way be associated

with the righteousness of faith.” (sect. 13). Calvin therefore claims that we must abolish our justice.

Calvin's reasoning has a logical appearance. Logic is perfect for geometry, filled with transcendental beings. It is not the same for our life on this Earth. We are immersed in an ocean of relationships. The Law of God is absolute. It is in this sense that we are necessarily in default with regard to the Law. The problem of works is that they can not be just with respect to the absolute. The Pharisees relativized the Fa by interpreting it in a formal and literal way. This attitude gives the illusion of respecting the Fa and therefore leads one to think oneself right. The Law is absolute, and works are judged by the yardstick of the absolute. This is the parable of the employees of the vineyard. Each one is judged individually in relation to the absolute and not in relation to human laws like equal pay for equal work.

What is condemned without ambiguity by the letters of St.-Paul, it is to think to be just with regard to the Law and thus to claim to be elected by this fact.

Works, therefore, are in no way excluded from the judgment which, moreover, can only be applied to works, but not only in relation to the Law of Scripture, but in relation to the Law of Absolute Love of Jesus Christ. “Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21). “if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (Cor. 13). It is therefore that faith is nothing if it is alone and that it can bring no justification by itself. Love is also necessary and love exist only through works. For Calvin quotes St. Paul: “Charity is the end and fulfilling of the Law (1 Tim. 1:5).” (Inst. Rel. p. 200).

In total contradiction to this text of St. Paul, Calvin absolutely denies the utility of works. He relies on another passage of St Paul: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast." (Eph. 2-8-9).

Now, it can not be inferred from this passage that works are totally useless, as Calvin writes. Grace and faith are needed to be saved. Works do not intervene in salvation, but in judgment. Grace, and the faith it brings, is necessary for salvation, but salvation rests on judgment. But what is the judgment about, except on works? If the judgment concerned only the reception of the grace and therefore of the faith, the verdict would be pronounced before the judgment since it intervenes after the death. Grace has no object after death. The problem of faith no longer arises. It is therefore a question of judging the acts. And acts are judged in relation to the Law of Love taught by Jesus of Nazareth. This is what St. James says loud and clear: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, Go in peace; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds." (Jc 2: 14-18).

Calvin also interprets a passage from St. Augustine: "The only hope of the faithful who groan under the burden of their corruptible flesh and under the infirmities of present life, says St. Augustine, is that we have a mediator, Jesus Christ, Who has obtained for us the remission of our sins. What can these words mean? If the faithful have only this hope, where is the confidence of works? For, in saying that this is the only hope of the faithful, he leaves them no other" (Traité de la Justification 1693 p. 164). Now, St. Augustine has by no means written that the

exclusive mediation of Jesus Christ did not pass through works, through love of neighbor. There is in fact no ambiguity in the text of St. Augustine. Jesus Christ is indeed the exclusive mediator, but this in no way implies, as Calvin claims, that this mediation is totally disconnected from works. Obviously, mediation does not go through works. It passes exclusively through Christ. But this mediation operates according to the works, on the basis of the judgment in relation to the Law of charity, of love. To speak like the Thomists: one thing is mediation, another the action of mediation. One thing grace, another the action of grace. One thing faith, another the action of faith.

Another aspect of Calvin's thought is the essentially bad nature of man. "What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water!" (Job 15-14 to 16).

Was not man created in the image of God? Did not God take the condition of man in Jesus of Nazareth? There is, therefore, another attitude than this autoflagellation, which can easily be derived from a feeling of self-justification: since I recognize myself as unworthy, am I not an Elect of God?

The other attitude is to glorify God and praise him for having made us in his image. To thank Him for having given us a spirit and a heart and a body also which is certainly not contemptible like Calvin judges. The absurdity would obviously be to take pride in our condition. Everything has been given to us. And this gift is certainly not a despicable thing as one reads it in Calvin in particular. Yes, man is an extraordinary creature. But of course, he did not create himself.

Calvin's argument is that man was created good, but the original sin of Adam and Eve plunged him into "corruption and rot." Adam and Eve

did not exist in the literal sense of Genesis. It is a symbol like all the story of Creation. Yet this symbol covers a reality. But no human thought can express the mystery of this reality: the mystery of Creation. And by baptism comes another mystery: the erasing of the original sin, thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth for the whole of Humanity and not only for the baptized. We can no longer say that man is damned by nature. It would deny the redemptive grace of the crucifixion. Calvin's morbid vision remains absolutely paradoxical, incomprehensible.

Starting from damnation, rather than salvation, Calvin then questions the justification: "Who will be saved say the disciples to Jesus? He replied that what was impossible to men was not impossible to God. This, said St. Bernard, is our only consolation, this is the foundation of our hope. But though we are certain that he is all-powerful, what shall we say of his will? Who is the one who can know whether he is worthy of love or hate? For who knew the intention of the Lord to be able to instruct him? It is necessary here that faith and truth should come to our aid, so that what concerns us and which is hidden in the Father's heart be revealed to us by his Spirit by bearing witness to us, persuading our hearts that we are children Of God, and persuade them by calling us and justifying us gratuitously by faith, for vocation and justification are as the medium through which we must pass from eternal predestination to the glory to come". (*Traité de la Justification* 1693 , pp. 216 & 217).

If, then, man is to receive from the Holy Spirit the revelation that he is a child of God, that he is called, and is therefore justified, man then knows that he is worthy of the love of God. God. Man, therefore, would have knowledge of his predestination to eternal salvation, if necessary, during his lifetime: "But if the fetcheries we endure come to us from other side than men, let us think of what is said in the Law. Is that all prosperity flows from the source of the blessing of God, and that all calamities are so many curses also coming from Him (Deut 28: 2ff.)" (*Traité de la Justification* 1693, p. 101).

This position, fundamentally totally contrary to all the affirmations of the New Testament, is at the origin of a characteristic attitude among many Protestants and which is the basis of the theses of the sociologist Max Weber. Protestants would be much more competent for business than Catholics. For many, social success is like a proof of divine protection and therefore of predestination to eternal salvation. As is often the case with the Protestants, passages from the Gospel are taken literally, like the passage of St. Matthew: "The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. Master, he said, you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more. His master replied, Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25, 14-30). To derive profit from its talents and to fruit his money would be a proof of the divine favor reserved for the Elect. The Medici and the Fuggers were Catholics. Catholics made huge fortunes well before and after Luther. An interesting example is Albrecht Dürer. He has made fruitful his talents, and his fortune as well, and remains a Catholic. He was at first tempted by Luther's ideas of Reform, but in view of his obstinacy against all reason, and especially his violence, Dürer stood behind Erasmus and the Catholic humanists, a rather useless precision, for there could be hardly found any humanist outside of Catholics. This is what is conveyed by an atheist philosopher of our time, Marcel Gaucheux. Catholic humanism is inscribed in the Rights of Man and no one can oppose this immense progress today. Gaucheux concludes that the Catholic religion having delivered its message would no longer be useful. It must be pointed out that the word humanism was used willy-nilly, so that the Marxists took themselves for humanists. I doubt that the millions of victims of the Soviet gulags and their Chinese counterparts could have shared this view.

We find this attitude among many Protestants as well as many Jews. So that one of them said: "If you do not have a Rolex at age 40, you have missed your life". But among the Jews there is no predestination other than to belong to the chosen people. Additionally, salvation is individual and is obtained by the respect of the Law of Moses. One can say that Calvin has a regressive vision of salvation, of a fetishistic nature much more than biblical.

Calvin does not shrink from any contradiction. If the works are of no use, then why: "There are some who, having been initiated by the sacraments into the Christian religion, renounce by the impurity of their life and by their actions, the God whom they confess with their mouths and are Christians only by name. Some who are hypocritical hide their wickedness under deceptive appearances. Finally, some who are regenerated by the spirit of God study themselves to true sanctity (*Traité de la Justification* 1693, p. 227).

I pass over those who "being entirely deprived of the knowledge of God are buried in idolatry; no spark of good will be found in them." (id.). For them, no possible redemption. Acts and works can therefore lead to damnation. Therefore, they intervene in salvation, contrary to Calvin's constant assertions. As for those who know themselves predestined, their works seem not to be useless, since they strive to live holy lives! Would it be that a less holy life could, in spite of their predestination to eternal salvation, devote them to Gehenna?

What does mean a holy life for Calvin?

Calvin interprets in his own way a passage from St. Augustine: "All who are distant from religion are worthy of punishment, far from deserving any reward, whatever may be the admiration which has been conceived of them because of The reputation of their virtue; because by the impurity of their heart they defile the goods of God which are pure. For

although they are the instruments God uses to preserve the society of men in the practice of justice, continence, friendship, temperance.” (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 235). Yet this text is perfectly clear. Of course, the practice of the just works enumerated by St. Augustine is a gift of God to men. But Augustine does not say that the concrete realization of these works in this world is not significant. On the contrary, they are the very basis of God's judgment on men. True, there is a gift first, but there is also judgment. Now Calvin never evokes judgment. For Calvin, judgment is a prerequisite because it is part of predestination. God would not need to judge, having in advance knowledge of everything. Predestination eliminates judgment. It is true that this is also a mystery. The mystery of the end of the World, really imbricated in the mystery of Creation.

Calvin tries to draw a proof of predestination in St. John: “Moreover, if what St. John says is true, that he who has not the Son of God has not life. Then those who are not partakers of Jesus Christ whoever they may be, whatever they may do and whatever they strive to do throughout the course of their lives, run to their misfortune and judgment which is Eternal death. It is for this reason that St. Augustine expresses himself thus: Our religion does not discern the righteous from the unjust by the law of works, but from the law of faith, without which works which seem good are converted into sins” (Boniface, 3 chap. 5, Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 239).

St. Paul met Jesus of Nazareth on the way to Damascus, whereas he had fought fiercely against the Christians. It is therefore that one who has not known Jesus Christ may one day meet him. It is true that it is not by itself, but by grace. But can it be said that St. Paul was at first predestined to fight against Christ, and then predestined to proclaim his Gospel? Moreover, St. John does not say that works are useless, but we can understand that they are useless without faith in the Christ. This is also what St Augustine says. Faith, the gift of the grace, is necessary, but

it does not say that works are not. The answer, often made to Calvinism, is that works are also a gift from God. But we can take this position for a negation of Freewill. For man would be given good works without any personal intervention. The only answer is that Freewill is a gift in itself. And this gift leaves man the freedom to follow the path of Christ. It is the use of this freedom that is judged the last day. Otherwise, the very idea of Judgment would have no meaning.

The following text confirms the position of Calvin: "For as regards the beginning of the Justification, we have no quarrel with the scholastics, who have some reasons and some equity. They remain in agreement with us, that the sinner being freed from the condemnation is justified. The difference there is that under the word justification they understand the renewal by which the Spirit of God reforms us to obey the Law. For this is how they define the righteousness of a truly regenerated man. They say that when man is once reconciled to God by faith in Jesus Christ, God repute him just because of his works and in consideration of his merits." ((Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 278 and 279). Those whom Calvin calls the scholastics, perhaps referring to the Thomists, separate the judgment from the faith. Calvin uses the word "repute" instead of "judge" who is the only one which actually suits. Of course, Calvin can not accept the idea of judgment which implies a posteriority to works, but above all a posteriority to the faith. From a rational point of view, there can be no duration in the nature of God. Calvin therefore refuses the mystery of Creation and its corollary of the end of the World. For the Creation and the End involve duration, which is paradoxical for the divine existence in the human thought. This is the foundation of this mystery.

Calvin seems to have great difficulty in convincing himself of the inanity of works. So many texts affirm the contrary! Therefore, he finally teaches us that works are nevertheless necessary: "It is therefore necessary that the purification of the heart precedes works, if we want those which

proceed from us to be accepted by God and received favorably, for in the end these words of Jeremiah remain always firm: let the eyes of God look to loyalty. And besides, the Holy Spirit has assured us through the mouth of St. Peter that it is by faith alone that our hearts are purified. Hence it follows that it is on true and lively faith that the first foundation of our justice must be founded" (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 268). We read further that "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, but the request of the uprights is pleasing to him. It is, therefore, something to be regarded as incontestable, and on which those who are so well versed in the knowledge of the Scriptures can be certain that the works which proceed from men who are not yet really sanctified whatever appearance they may have can only be considered as sins far away that God imputes to them for justice" (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 266)

In reality, Calvin confirms here that human works are of no use. Much worse, they are only sins: "It is not surprising that works that have been sanctified in the Lord's law become soiled by the impurity of the wicked, and that what an impure hand touches can only make impure what is holy." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 263). They are purified for the predestinated only: "One thing is certain that we can not attain any perfection, while we are clothed in our flesh and that, moreover, the Law pronounces judgment and death against those who will not fulfilled all righteousness by their works; the law would always have something to accuse us and convince us if the mercy of God does not intervene and absolve us by a continual remission of our sins" (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 276). Our works can only be irremediably bad, except to be purified by divine favor. It is unquestionable that works are of no use in salvation, and that there is no form of divine judgment in the doctrine of Calvin.

One must read attentively what Calvin writes, otherwise one might think that he contradicts himself. It is also the case of this passage: "For

if at the moment that we recall in our memory all the gifts which it pleased God to depart to us, these gifts are in some way like rays of his face which illuminate us, so that we may contemplate the light of His sovereign goodness: even more so our good works, which are the effects of His grace, must bear us to this contemplation, since they reveal to us that the Spirit of Adoption has been given us." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 318).

On the one hand, one reads here that the predestined one is conscious of his state. The saved would know he was saved. His works, which may well be identical to those of the damned, and equally filled with solicitude for others, are good because of their purification brought by divine grace to the only predestined. It is always the negation of the judgment of God.

Overzealousness is equally useless, as if there was a limit to what one owes to God. The Law, nothing but the Law, and even if it were respected, it serves as nothing, as Calvin never ceases to affirm. "Indeed, boasting of having done works of supererogation, [ie, going beyond the Law] how can this accord with this commandment: When you have done all things which are commanded, say: we are useless servants because what we were required to do, we did (Luke 17-10). That is why the Lord commands us to acknowledge sincerely and to consider in ourselves, that we can not give him free duties and that all those whom we render him, we are obliged to give back to them" (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 294).

One could only accept this other passage of Calvin: "There are two main plagues that we must overcome from our hearts in this situation, one is the trust in our works and the other the raise and the glory that we could assign them "(Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 303). That would be after a very quick reading. For Calvin, works are always sins in themselves. They do not take into account, not by a judgment on their quality, but on

a divine decision to purify them when they are carried out by predestined persons. In this case, the predestined has all the good reasons to be all joyful of his good works: "First, it is that comparing their good cause with that of the wicked, which is evil, they conceive a certain hope of their victory, not so much in consideration of their justice, which is the cause of the just condemnation which their enemies have deserved. Secondly, in recognizing themselves before God, even though they do not compare with anyone, the purity of their consciousness makes them feel much consolation and gives them full confidence." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 314).

Calvin always uses the same interpretation filter. His method consists in absolutizing the texts, that is to say in rendering the affirmations exclusive. This is also the case here: "This is what St. Augustine demonstrates very elegantly and in a few words when he speaks in this way: I do not say to the Lord: do not despise the works of my hands. I have sought the Lord with my hands and I am not disappointed. However, I do not praise the works of my hands, for I am afraid that when you come to cast your eyes you will find more sins than merits. I say only this and this is the only thing I ask and desire: do not despise the works of my hands. See Your works in me, and not mine. For if you see mine, you can only condemn them, whereas if you see yours, you will crown them. Now all the good works that I do proceed from you. St. Augustine alleges two reasons why he would not dare to show and praise his works before God. The first is that if he sees in them something good, he sees that it does not proceed from him and the second that what is even good is overcome by the multitude of his sins." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 326 & 327).

Calvin draws from this text the negation of the Freewill and the total inanity of the works. On the contrary, in this text, St. Augustine contemplates the judgment of God on his life, at his death or at the last judgment. It is an act of humility before God. Moreover, St. Augustine

evokes his good works. He think they are good, but obviously before the infinite goodness of God, the goodness of human works is always negligible. At no time did St Augustine write that all our good works are necessarily impure as Calvin writes. The divine mercy is to grant, nevertheless, a value to our good works, that is to say, complying with his will.

To be truly precise, it should be noted that Calvin envisages God's judgment: "The remission of sins being thus made the first, the works that come next are considered in relation to anything other than their merit, for all that they are imperfect is covered by the perfection of Jesus Christ and all that they have of stains and defilements is cleansed by its purity so that they do not come to account before the judgment of God." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 464). But precisely Calvin excludes the works of men from judgment. You will never know what this judgment is for Calvin? Judgment precedes acts because they are included in predestination.

He relies on St. Bernard to reach the same conclusion: "These words of St. Bernard, in which he says that as it is enough to merit not to presume of any merit, it is enough to have none to be judged. This expression is hard, but St. Bernard softened its hardness by first explaining his thought. Take pains, he said, to have merits. When you have them, acknowledge that they are given you. Hope in the fruit of the mercy of God." Again, this is an act of humility exactly like that of St. Augustine. Nevertheless, we must have merits in view of the judgment. St. Bernard seems to contradict himself by disregarding the merits of the judgment. In reality, he speaks of the merits of which one would like to boast.

Calvin's negation of the judgment is even clearer hereafter: "For we do not imagine a dead faith, or a justification which can subsist without good works; but here is the difference we make, that although we agree that faith and good works are necessarily united to each other, we make

justice consist in faith and not in works" (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 386). Judgment would therefore focus exclusively on faith and not on works. But if faith is given to the predestinated, then the judgment is devoid of content since God would judge what he has decided from all eternity!

Finally, Calvin comes to the innumerable texts which contradict his doctrine. We are going to pass from the bad Roman translations, in the sense that we must give according to him to the words used by the authors of the sacred texts, passing by the total rejection of the sacred texts too contrary to his theses.

I shall begin with the latter. Exit the Ecclesiastic: "Mercy shall give place to every man according to the merit of his works". Exit the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.". Calvin added: "Although I could reject the authority of the Ecclesiastic, I do not wish to exercise my right, but I deny that the author of this book has been cited faithfully, whatever it may be, and the natural meaning of these Words which have been corrupted in the Latin version." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 352). In fact, Calvin denies any theological value to the Ecclesiastic. And he does not hide what he thinks of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In the same way, one should understand the word just in the sense retained by Calvin: "We see now that there is not much cause to be alarmed by what the faithful are so often called righteous in the Scriptures? I confess, surely, that they are called by that name because of the holiness of their lives. But as they apply much more to the study of justice than they do, it is quite reasonable that the justice of works whatever be, yields to Justification by the faith from which it holds everything what it is." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 478).

Finally, we must come to the confrontation of the letter of St. James and the letters of St. Paul. It would only be a vocabulary problem. The word faith does not have the same objective, if not the same meaning in these texts.

“But our adversaries are not here. They say that St. James is so opposed to us that it is not possible for us to respond to the difficulty which arises from the words of this apostle: for he teaches that Abraham was justified by his works, and so do we as long as we are justified by works and not only by faith. But what can be their thought? Do they pretend that St. Paul and St. James contradict each other in this encounter? If they consider St. James to be the minister of Jesus Christ, they must explain his words in such a way that they conform to those of that divine savior who spoke through the mouth of St. Paul. The Holy Spirit assures by the mouth of this apostle that Abraham has obtained justice by faith and not by works and we say similarly that we are justified by faith without the works of the Law. The same Spirit teaches, through the ministry of St. James, that the righteousness of Abraham and ours depends not only on faith, but also on works. It is certain, however, that the Holy Spirit does not contradict himself. In what way should we reconcile things? The objective of St. James is to show how ridiculous these men were to imagine being faithful to that vain phantom of faith: they manifested their infidelity by neglecting and ceasing to do the works which ought to distinguish the faithful, and nevertheless did not fail to boast of having false faith” (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 479 then 484).

For Calvin, this is a problem of words. Faith and justification do not have the same meaning in the two texts: “Our adversaries make two paralogisms by misinterpreting at the same time the term faith and that of justifying. What St. James calls faith is nothing but a frivolous opinion far removed from the truth of faith, which he has done by way of concession without in any way derogating from the true cause as he demonstrates it the beginning of his words: my brothers who will profit

by faith if any one says that he has faith and that he does not have works? (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 479 then 486).

Calvin justifies his position by the interpretation that this faith is only an illusion of faith that is limited to believing that there is a God.

With regard to “The other paralogism: it seems that St. James puts into the works a part of our justification. Let us therefore grant this apostle with all the writing and with himself, we must necessarily take the term to justify in another sense than it takes in St. Paul. In the sense of St. Paul, we are said to be justified, when the memory of our injustice being effaced, we are deemed righteous. If St. James had spoken in this view, he would have wrongly quoted the testimony of Moses. Abraham believed in God. For here is how these words are related to the preceding ones. Abraham was justified by the works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar. And so the writing was fulfilled saying that Abraham believed and it was allotted to him for righteousness.” (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 479 then 489).

This passage is enlightened by these lines a few pages before: our enemies “say, as I have already insinuated, that if St. Paul has no stronger argument to prove the justice of faith than that which is written of Abraham: that faith has been imputed to him for righteousness, that we may conclude with regard to works what the apostle concludes (Rom 4-3 Gal. 3-6) with regard to faith, since is said of the action of Phinehas that it was also allocated for righteousness. And this is also the consequence they draw. For as if they had gained victory, they decide, after having agreed with us, that we are justified by faith, that we are not by faith alone, and that works are necessary to render our justice accomplished. I conjure good people here who know that the true rule of righteousness must be taken from Scripture alone” (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 479 then 460).

Scripture asserts on many occasions that works will be judged at the last day. A judgment can only relate to acts in relation to criteria. Here there is only one: the law of love demanded by Jesus of Nazareth. Again, how could the judgment be about obtaining faith through grace? Since it is God who gives grace, why should a judgment be required? The cause would be tried from all eternity!

Calvin finds confirmation of his interpretation of St. Paul: "They allege in the same sense this passage of St. Paul: it is not those who listen to the Law who are righteous before God, but those who put the Law into effect will be justified (Rom 2-13). I do not wish to make use of the solution of St. Ambrose who states that it was said because the fulfillment of the Law is faith in Jesus Christ" (*Traité de la Justification* 1693, p. 479 then 494).

It is therefore that the words of St. James do not have to be brought into conformity with all the rest of the Scriptures, for they are here entirely similar to those of St. Paul. St. Ambrose's argument goes in the direction of Calvin, who rests salvation on the faith only, moreover, given by divine grace. But, of course, St. Ambrose does not reject the judgment of works.

There are, however, other passages of the Scriptures still clearer: "Let us now turn to the passages where it is said that God will give to each according to his works. These are the ones that follow: each will win in his body according to what he has done either right or wrong (Rom 6-9-10). There will be tribulations and anguish over every soul of man who does evil, but glory honor and peace will be for all who do good. And they will come forth to know them that have done well in the resurrection of life. But those who have done wrong in the resurrection of damnation" (*Traité de la Justification* 1693, p. 479 then 514 & 515).

Calvin adds other passages a little farther: "Let them do good; that they are rich in good works and that they are quick to give and share their goods to those who need them, making themselves a treasure of a good foundation for the future so that they may obtain life Eternal (Tim. 6:17). Good works are compared, as we see here, with wealth which we shall enjoy in the beatitude of eternal life. I reply that we shall never have a true understanding of these passages until we know the purpose which the Holy Spirit has had there. If what Jesus Christ says is true where our treasure is also our heart. As the children of the age attach themselves to nothing with so much application as to acquire that which is the happiness of the present life." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 548 to 550).

Hence it is no longer a question of words alone, but of the impossibility of understanding these passages, not because of a lack of clarity but because of a hidden intention of the Holy Spirit. One wonders why then the texts used by Calvin to justify his doctrine would be exempt from this sort of difficulty. Could it be that Calvin would have known the intentions of the Holy Spirit?

Yet there is still doubt. We come to the end of Calvin's argument. The works, though, is it really nothing? "And not only by virtue of these promises of the Gospel the Lord accepts our works, but besides this he accompanies them with blessings which he had promised by his covenant to those who would have fulfilled the Law. I confess therefore that the faithful obtains by their works the reward which the Lord had promised in his Law to those who were truly righteous and truly holy, but we must always look at the causes which attract this grace." (Traité de la Justification 1693, p. 427).

This cause, it will be learned a little farther still, is predestination. And the consequence is that the judgment of God does not relate to righteous works, but only to the predestination to receive the grace of faith: "The

remission of sins being thus made first, the works that come next are considered in relation to everything other than their merit, for all that is imperfect is covered by the perfection of Jesus Christ, and all that they have of stains and defilements is cleansed by purity so that they do not come before the judgment of God" (*Traité de la Justification* 1693, p. 479 then 464).

Chapter 2

Institution of the Christian Religion, Jean Calvin (Translated by Henry Beveridge)

This fundamental book of Calvin is the consequence of his doctrine on the practice of religion.

The most well-known aspect relates to the munificence due to God. Calvin as Luther completely denies its utility. He then takes up the old arguments of the Iconoclasts against the representations of God and the saints in the churches.

“and the other Sacred rites do not require gold, and things which are not bought with gold, please not by gold. They step beyond the boundary, therefore, when in sacred matters they are so much delighted with gold, driver, ivory, marble, gems, and silks, that unless everything is overlaid with costly show, or rather insane luxury ...It was a Father who said, It is a horrid abomination to see in Christian temples a painted image either of Christ or of any saint. Nor was this pronounced by the voice era

single individual; but an Ecclesiastical Council also decreed, "Let nought that is worshipped be depicted on walls." Very far are they from keeping within these boundaries when they leave not a corner without images" (Epistle to the King of France Francis).

Progressives will not go that far. They will retain the rejection of all munificence for a reason that would have been worthless to Calvin. Love of neighbor would pass first. Give your money to the poor, not only first, but exclusively. The passage of the Gospel on the widow who gives all that she has to the treasury of the Temple of Jerusalem, aimed in particular to complete its construction, contradicts this narrow vision.

Calvin claims that the representations of God and of the saints were excluded from the churches at the beginning of Christendom. "First, then, if we attach any weight to the authority of the ancient Church, let us remember, that for five hundred years, during which religion was in a more prosperous condition, and a purer doctrine flourished, Christian churches were completely free from visible representations. Hence their first admission as an ornament to churches took place after the purity of the ministry had somewhat degenerated." (I Ch11 par 13).

It is a total error resulting from ignorance. The chalice of the sanctuary of St. Sergius of Rosafa in Syria, dating from the years 380, wears a Christ crowned with a crucifere nimbus. But there is much more ancient: the representations of Christ in the Roman catacombs date from the beginning of the 2nd century. The earliest known aureole of Jesus of Nazareth appears on gems, supposed to be of Gnostic origin. One of the two gems is dated from the 2nd century. From the beginning of the Christian era, the face of Christ appearing on the Shroud was exposed in a rectangular frame leaving a circular opening.

It was not until the eighth and ninth centuries that an iconoclast wave flooded over the Empire of Constantinople and caused massive

destruction of statues and paintings and the persecution of the supporters of images. The West was spared by this wave of madness which ended at the second Council of Nicaea, as Calvin remarked: "Enough, I believe, would have been said on this subject, were I not in a manner arrested by the Council of Nice; not the celebrated Council which Constantine the Great assembled, but one which was held eight hundred years ago by the orders and under the auspices of the Empress Irene. This Council decreed not only that images were to be used in churches, but also that they were to be worshipped. Every thing, therefore, that I have said, is in danger of suffering great prejudice from the authority of this Synod. To confess the truth, however, I am not so much moved by this consideration, as by a wish to make my readers aware of the lengths to which the infatuation has been carried by those who had a greater fondness for images than became Christians. But let us first dispose of this matter. Those who defend the use of images appeal to that Synod for support. But there is a refutation extant which bears the name of Charlemagne, and which is proved by its style to be a production of that period." (I Ch11 par 14).

In the same vein as iconoclasm, one can also notice an attack of Calvin against the cult of the saints: "The distinction of what is called *dulia* and *latria* was invented for the very purpose of permitting divine honours to be paid to angels and dead men with apparent impunity. For it is plain that the worship which Papists pay to saints differs in no respect from the worship of God: for this worship is paid without distinction; only when they are pressed they have recourse to the evasion, that what belongs to God is kept unimpaired, because they leave him *latria*. But since the question relates not to the word, but the thing, how can they be allowed to sport at will with a matter of the highest moment? But not to insist on this, the utmost they will obtain by their distinction is, that they give worship to God, and service to the others. For *λατρεία* (*latrei`a*) in Greek has the same meaning as worship in Latin; whereas *δουλεία* (*doulei`a*) properly means slavery, though the words are sometimes

used in Scripture indiscriminately. But granting that the distinction is invariably preserved, the thing to be questioned is the meaning of each. Doulei`a unquestionably means slavery, and latrei`a worship. But no man doubts that to serve is something higher than to worship. For it were often a hard thing to serve him whom you would not refuse to reverence. It is, therefore, an unjust division to assign the greater to the saints and leave the less to God. But several of the ancient fathers observed this distinction. What if they did, when all men see that it is not only improper, but utterly frivolous?" (I Ch12 par 2).

In reality, the Church has always struggled against the cult of images and the excesses of the cult of the saints. One can not deny a quasi-perpetual resurgence of a form of superstitious idolatry in certain practices. Images are only a support for prayer. They set our attention so easy to divert. We generally need benchmarks and recalls in all our activities. Few people can stay focused on a subject for more than a few minutes with no other activity than thought! Acts are needed to fix attention. The sight basically made us distract from our current occupation. Eyes closed, it is the ear that will take charge of turning us away. So there must be silence. It is nowadays a rare commodity.

The distinction evoked by Calvin remains unknown to the faithful today. The Church has long insisted on the idea of intercession, less scholastic than the concepts of Latria and Dulia. But intercession can also lead to excesses. One comes to no longer pray the Holy Spirit! No one knows the Veni Creator and even less the magnificent Veni Sancte Spiritus. I have occasionally heard a vague translation from the first in a church of Lausanne.

This is followed by statements of a rationalist nature: "It is a Father who testifies, 'That the substance of bread and wine in the Eucharist does not cease but remains, just as the nature and substance of man remains united to the Godhead in the Lord Jesus Christ.' This boundary they

pass in pretending that, as soon as the words of our Lord are pronounced, the substance of bread and wine ceases, and is transubstantiated into body and blood. They were Fathers, who, as they exhibited only one Eucharist to the whole Church, and kept back from it the profane and flagitious; so they, in the severest terms, censured all those who, being present, did not communicate How far have they removed these landmarks, in filling not churches only, but also private houses, with their masses, admitting all and sundry to be present, each the more willingly the more largely he pays, however wicked and impure he may be,--not inviting any one to faith in Christ and faithful communion in the sacraments, but rather vending their own work for the grace and merits of Christ!" (Epistle to the King of France Francis).

Here we rejoin the mystery of Creation. What is existence? The scientists of the twentieth century claimed to have discovered it in an identity of energy and mass. Nothing remains of their lucubrations. Existence is an absolute concept, like time and space, which we are using to express our thoughts, but the concept itself can not be explained. We think by concepts, but we can not think the concepts themselves, we can not explain the concepts. The real presence of the Christ in the host is a mystery that enters into the mystery of the resurrection. What is the nature of the resurrected body? A changeable and corruptible matter like that which we seem to be formed? Is it not existence itself, underlying the mysteries of Creation and the End of the world?

The Catholic Church teaches us that the Christ is not only really present in the host, but in ourselves if we accept it. Calvin's rationalist position can not be reconciled with this mystery. Moreover, the God of Calvin is by no means a God of Love who would lean toward the Christian. It is the inaccessible and avenging God of the Old Testament.

We can not doubt, however, the profound faith which animates Calvin: "Nay, although learned men, and men of the greatest talent, should take

the opposite side, summoning and ostentatiously displaying all the powers of their genius in the discussion; if they are not possessed of shameless effrontery, they will be compelled to confess that the Scripture exhibits clear evidence of its being spoken by God, and, consequently, of its containing his heavenly doctrine. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely entrusted. This connection is most aptly expressed by Isaiah in these words, 'My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever,' (Isa. 59:21)" (I Ch 7 par 4).

And a little further: "Read Demosthenes or Cicero, read Plato, Aristotle, or any other of that class: you will, I admit, feel wonderfully allured, pleased, moved, enchanted; but turn from them to the reading of the Sacred Volume, and whether you will or not, it will so affect you, so pierce your heart, so work its way into your very marrow, that, in comparison of the impression so produced, that of orators and philosophers will almost disappear; making it manifest that in the Sacred Volume there is a truth divine, a something which makes it immeasurably superior to all the gifts and graces attainable by man" (I Ch 8 par 1).

The following pages are all arguments in favor of his faith in the Scriptures. Calvin does not in any way attack the Catholic Church on this point, but atheists, Muslims and supporters of other religions and sects.

Calvin's problem stems from his interpretation of the texts. From the next page the heresies accumulate. And I do not speak only of theological heresies, but first of all philosophical. The very idea of God, infinite goodness, can not agree with the arbitrariness that Calvin attributes to it. Predestination is above all an irreducible contradiction on

the philosophical level: "Nay, the modest and teachable reader will find a sufficient reason in the promise contained in Isaiah, that all the children of the renovated Church 'shall be taught of the Lord,' (Isaiah 54:13). This singular privilege God bestows on his Elect only, whom he separates from the rest of mankind. For what is the beginning of true doctrine but prompt alacrity to hear the Word of God? And God, by the mouth of Moses, thus demands to be heard: 'It is not in heavens that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart,' (Deut. 30:12, 14). God having been pleased to reserve the treasure of intelligence for his children, no wonder that so much ignorance and stupidity is seen in the generality of mankind. In the generality, I include even those specially chosen, until they are ingrafted into the body of the Church. Isaiah, moreover, while reminding us that the prophetic doctrine would prove incredible not only to strangers, but also to the Jews, who were desirous to be thought of the household of God, subjoins the reason, when he asks, 'To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?' (Isaiah 53:1). If at any time, then we are troubled at the small number of those who believe, let us, on the other hand, call to mind, that none comprehend the mysteries of God save those to whom it is given" (I Ch 7 par 5).

Recalling Luther's remarks, Calvin then asserts that everyone can interpret the scriptures. I quote the passage of Calvin without further comments on a problem already developed for Luther: "But in regard to those parts of Scripture which, to our capacities, are dark and intricate, what forbids us to explain them in clearer terms--terms, however, kept in reverent and faithful subordination to Scripture truth, used sparingly and modestly, and not without occasion?" (I Ch 13 par 3).

Calvin uses here the concept of subsistence with existence and essence. His argument was taken up by Cardinal de Bérulle in the great Thomist movement: "For the communication of Essence establishes the Mystery

of the Trinity and the communication of Subsistence establishes the Mystery of the Incarnation" (The Works of Cardinal de Bérulle 1665, p. 192).

The passage of Calvin, certainly in a language of a time gone by, is not without importance. It is this argument which led to the condemnation by Calvin of Michel Servet (1511-1553) who developed a non-Trinitarian Christology. By order of Calvin, then at the municipal council of Geneva, Servetus was burnt alive: "But to say nothing more of words, let us now attend to the thing signified. By person, then, I mean a subsistence in the Divine essence,--a subsistence which, while related to the other two, is distinguished from them by incommunicable properties. By subsistence we wish something else to be understood than essence. For if the Word were God simply and had not some property peculiar to himself, John could not have said correctly that he had always been with God. When he adds immediately after, that the Word was God, he calls us back to the one essence. But because he could not be with God without dwelling in the Father, hence arises that subsistence, which, though connected with the essence by an indissoluble tie, being incapable of separation, yet has a special mark by which it is distinguished from it. Now, I say that each of the three subsistences while related to the others is distinguished by its own properties. Here relation is distinctly expressed, because, when God is mentioned simply and indefinitely the name belongs not less to the Son and Spirit than to the Father. But whenever the Father is compared with the Son, the peculiar property of each distinguishes the one from the other. Again, whatever is proper to each I affirm to be incommunicable, because nothing can apply or be transferred to the Son which is attributed to the Father as a mark of distinction. I have no objections to adopt the definition of Tertullian, provided it is properly understood, 'that there is in God a certain arrangement or economy, which makes no change on the unity of essence'--Tertull. Lib. contra Praxeam" (I Ch 13 par 6).

Osiander (1498-1552), the same man who published the works of Copernicus in 1543 the year of his death, curiously rejecting in a preface of his hand that Copernicus had really wanted to propose a heliocentric system, Osiander, after having adhered to Lutheranism, fell under the wrath of Calvin concerning justification: "Nor, though the spirit is given by God, and when it quits the flesh again returns to him, does it follow that it is a portion withdrawn from his essence. Here, too, Osiander, carried away by his illusions entangled himself in an impious error, by denying that the image of God could be in man without his essential righteousness; as if God were unable, by the mighty power of his Spirit, to render us conformable to himself, unless Christ were substantially transfused into us." (I Ch 15 par 5).

The most curious thing about Osiander's attitude towards Copernicus's heliocentrism is that he had nothing to fear from possible Vatican thunderstorms. He was profoundly Protestant. The idea that the Protestants could be more open-minded, as has been repeated for centuries, is somewhat illusory from the outset. The reality is that men of middle age are irreducibly enclosed in their convictions. The famous Max Planck saw in this human blemish the only reason for the persistence of the most enormous stupidities which have not ceased for thousands of years to infest the knowledge of Nature, pompously called scientific.

Then, recalling most of Aristotle's errors on the relation between perceptions and thought, Calvin returns to the original sin of Adam and Eve with some philosophical arguments: "First, I admit that there are five senses, which Plato (in Theæteto) prefers calling organs, by which all objects are brought into a common sensorium, as into a kind of receptacle: Next comes the imagination (phantasia), which distinguishes between the objects brought into the sensorium: Next, reason, to which the general power of Judgment belongs" (I Ch 15 par 6). What Calvin calls here fantasy is the translation of the Greek word φαντασία

(phantasia), used in particular by Scot Erigena to designate the images of sensible objects in the mind. We recognize in these lines the thesis of Aristotle then commonly accepted following the comments of St. Thomas Aquinas. As we have seen, this philosophical doctrine amounts to denying the transcendental nature of the human mind and distinguishing man from the animal, from the plant, or even from the mineral, only by semantic subtleties.

Obviously, the consequences of Aristotle's theses on the notions of right and wrong are completely disrupted by the Scriptures. Calvin exposes at length his thesis of predestination and justification without works, of which I evoked in the first part.

We are now looking at the Freewill. It may be noted that Calvin is completely opposed to any idea of contingency, thus rejecting part of Thomas Aquinas' argument for the possibility of Freewill: "The thing to be proved, therefore, is, that single events are so regulated by God, and all events so proceed from his determinate counsel, that nothing happens fortuitously... This being admitted, it is certain that not a drop of rain falls without the express command of God." (I Ch 16 par 5); "it was a true saying of Basil the Great, that Fortune and Chance are heathen terms; the meaning of which ought not to occupy pious minds." (I Ch 16 par 8).

It was more delicate to rely on St. Augustine. In a passage referring to his book *Against the Academicians*, St. Augustine combines this divine determinism with Freewill, a paradox made possible by the mysteries of Creation and the gift of Freewill. How will Calvin get out of it: by interpreting by semantic subtleties the Freewill accepted by St. Augustine: "We ought also to be moved by the words of Augustine (*Retract. lib. 1 cap. 1*), 'In my writings against the Academics,' says he, 'I regret having so often used the term Fortune; although I intended to denote by it not some goddess, but the fortuitous issue of events in

external matters, whether good or evil. Hence, too, those words, Perhaps, Perchance, Fortuitously, which no religion forbids us to use, though everything must be referred to Divine Providence. Nor did I omit to observe this when I said, Although, perhaps, that which is vulgarly called Fortune, is also regulated by a hidden order, and what we call Chance is nothing else than that the reason and cause of which is secret. It is true, I so spoke, but I repent of having mentioned Fortune there as I did, when I see the very bad custom which men have of saying, not as they ought to do, So God pleased, but, So Fortune pleased. In short, Augustine everywhere teaches, that if anything is left to fortune, the world moves at random. And although he elsewhere declares (*Quæstionum*, lib. 83). that all things are carried on, partly by the Freewill of man, and partly by the Providence of God, he shortly after shows clearly enough that his meaning was, that men also are ruled by Providence, when he assumes it as a principle, that there cannot be a greater absurdity than to hold that anything is done without the ordination of God; because it would happen at random. For which reason, he also excludes the contingency which depends on human will, maintaining a little further on, in clearer terms, that no cause must be sought for but the will of God. When he uses the term permission, the meaning which he attaches to it will best appear from a single passage (*De Trinity*. lib. 3 cap. 4), where he proves that the will of God is the supreme and primary cause of all things, because nothing happens without his order or permission. He certainly does not figure God sitting idly in a watch-tower, when he chooses to permit anything. The will which he represents as interposing is, if I may so express it, active (*actualis*), and but for this could not be regarded as a cause." (I Ch 16 par 8).

In this passage, Calvin uses his good old method of exclusion. Now an affirmation is never exclusive except to specify it, which St. Augustine never did. The prescience of God is exclusive of Freewill only in the mind of Luther and that of Calvin, for everything is possible to God, as

to reconcile what is irreconcilable in the eyes of rationalists, in the eyes of human thought.

We find all the illusion of the rationalists in this affirmation of Calvin :
“It is true, indeed, that in the law and the Gospel are comprehended mysteries which far transcend the measure of our sense; but since God, to enable his people to understand those mysteries which he has deigned to reveal in his word, enlightens their minds with a spirit of understanding, they are now no longer a deep, but a path in which they can walk safely--a lamp to guide their feet--a light of life--a school of clear and certain truth. But the admirable method of governing the world is justly called a deep, because, while it lies hid from us, it is to be reverently adored.” (I Ch 17 par 2).

Does this mean that the mysteries can be explained by the human mind, with the help of revelation? It would no longer be a mystery. The mysteries are revealed to us, but precisely they are mysteries and they can not be explained!

One can pass quickly on the long development that follows. Calvin tries to reconcile his predestination with the impossibility of imputing to God the evil acts, even the crimes, committed by men predestined to realize them, beginning with the betrayal of Judas: “And certainly, in regard to the treachery of Judas, there is just as little ground to throw the blame of the crime upon God, because He was both pleased that his Son should be delivered up to death, and did deliver him, as to ascribe to Judas the praise of our redemption. Hence Augustine, in another place, truly observes, that when God makes his scrutiny, he looks not to what men could do, or to what they did, but to what they wished to do, thus taking account of their will and purpose.” (I Ch 18 par 4).

For Calvin, this will is the interstice between man and his determinate destiny. The will would be free in some way, but the very act which

should result from it is predetermined. It is once again one of his semantic rotten tricks which leaves stunned.

Calvin leaves to man a part worthy of consideration, since it would not be entirely earth and mud: "nothing being more absurd than that those should glory in their excellence who not only dwell in tabernacles of clay, but are themselves in part dust and ashes" (I Ch 15 par 1). What then is the rest of man made of? Calvin will not tell. Yet the whole of man is plunged, not only in sin, but into filth: "All of us, therefore, descending from an impure seed, come into the world tainted with the contagion of sin. Nay, before we behold the light of the sun we are in God's sight defiled and polluted. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one,' says the Book of Job (Job 14:4). We thus see that the impurity of parents is transmitted to their children, so that all, without exception, are originally depraved. The commencement of this depravity will not be found until we ascend to the first parent of all as the fountain head. We must, therefore, hold it for certain, that, in regard to human nature, Adam was not merely a progenitor, but, as it were, a root, and that, accordingly, by his corruption, the whole human race was deservedly vitiated. This is plain from the contrast which the Apostle draws between Adam and Christ, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,' (Rom. 5:19-21)." (II Ch 1 par 5-6).

There is no doubt that this morbid vision of man does not call into question the extraordinary nature of man in the image of God.

It's Adam's fault: "Adam, therefore, when he corrupted himself, transmitted the contagion to all his posterity. For a heavenly Judge, even our Saviour himself, declares that all are by birth vicious and depraved, when he says that that which is born of the flesh is fleshy (John 3:6), and

that therefore the gate of life is closed against all until they have been regenerated." (II Ch 1 par 6).

This beautiful reasoning is very logical, unfortunately things are not so simple, for Adam certainly never existed in the proper sense. Genesis is a symbol. It is in the mystery of Creation that the nature of man is to be found. To tell the truth, it does not change Calvin's outcome. Man is sinful certainly, but is he totally sinful? Jesus of Nazareth came by his death to redeem the man. Baptism, moreover, erases the original sin, if not what is it for? Why, then, should man remain immersed in the foul Adamic condition? The whole thought of Calvin soaks in the idea of predestination. How then could those who are predestined be justified? We have seen Calvin's answer. The same acts are sins or not according to whether one is in the rank of the damned or predestined to eternal salvation: "Here I only wished briefly to observe, that the whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, is so deluged, as it were, that no part remains exempt from sin, and, therefore, everything which proceeds from him is imputed as sin. Thus Paul says, that all carnal thoughts and affections are enmity against God, and consequently death (Rom. 8:7)." (II Ch 1 par 9).

In passing, it will be noted that in the passage quoted above, Calvin states that "Jesus Christ, who is the judge before whom we shall have to account." But again, give an account of what if everything is predestined?

Calvin's position challenges the general opinion of the Fathers of the Church. They would have been influenced by the philosophers: "Among ecclesiastical writers, although there is none who did not acknowledge that sound reason in man was seriously injured by sin, and the will greatly entangled by vicious desires, yet many of them made too near an approach to the philosophers. Some of the most ancient writers appear to me to have exalted human strengths from a fear that a distinct

acknowledgment of its impotence might expose them to the jeers of the philosophers with whom they were disputing, and also furnish the flesh, already too much disinclined to good, with a new pretext for sloth. Therefore, to avoid teaching anything which the majority of mankind might deem absurd, they made it their study, in some measure, to reconcile the doctrine of Scripture with the dogmas of philosophy, at the same time making it their special care not to furnish any occasion to sloth. This is obvious from their words. Chrysostom says, God having placed good and evil in our power, has given us full freedom of choice; he does not keep back the unwilling, but embraces the willing, (Homil. de Prodit. Judae)." (II Ch 2 par 4).

We must not despair Billancourt, so to speak, to use the words of Sartre, who had long since seen the Marxist impasse.

Calvin tells us the positions of these Fathers of the Church on Freewill, which he regards as speaking "so doubtfully and obscurely, except St. Augustine." He will then have no trouble in showing us this philosophical influence and that their positions must be rejected or taken in the direction of predestination. According to Chrysostome: "This is obvious from their words. Chrysostom says, God having placed good and evil in our power, has given us full freedom of choice; he does not keep back the unwilling, but embraces the willing, (Homil. de Prodit. Judae). Again, He who is wicked is often, when he so chooses, changed into good, and he who is good falls through sluggishness, and becomes wicked. For the Lord has made our nature free. He does not lay us under necessity, but furnishing apposite remedies, allows the whole to depend on the views of the patient, (Homily. 18, in Genesis). Again, As we can do nothing rightly until aided by the grace of God, so, until we bring forward what is our own, we cannot obtain favour from above, (Homily. 52). He had previously said, As the whole is not done by divine assistance, we ourselves must of necessity bring somewhat. Accordingly, one of his common expressions is, Let us bring what is our own, God

will supply the rest. In unison with this, Jerome says, It is ours to begin, God's to finish: it is ours to offer what we can, his to supply what we cannot, (Dialog. 3 Cont. Pelag). From these sentences, you see that they have bestowed on man more than he possesses for the study of virtue, because they thought that they could not shake off our innate sluggishness unless they argued that we sin by ourselves alone. With what skill they have thus argued we shall afterwards see. Assuredly we shall soon be able to show that the sentiments just quoted are most inaccurate. Moreover although the Greek Fathers, above others, and especially Chrysostom, have exceeded due bounds in extolling the powers of the human will, yet all ancient theologians, with the exception of Augustine, are so confused, vacillating, and contradictory on this subject, that no certainty can be obtained from their writings. It is needless, therefore, to be more particular in enumerating every separate opinion. It will be sufficient to extract from each as much as the exposition of the subject seems to require. Succeeding writers (every one courting applause for his acuteness in the defence of human nature) have uniformly, one after the other, gone more widely astray, until the common dogma came to be, that man was corrupted only in the sensual part of his nature, that reason remained entire, and will was scarcely impaired. Still the expression was often on their lips, that man's natural gifts were corrupted, and his supernatural taken away. Of the thing implied by these words, however, scarcely one in a hundred had any distinct idea. Certainly, were I desirous clearly to express what the corruption of nature is, I would not seek for any other expression. But it is of great importance attentively to consider what the power of man now is when vitiated in all the parts of his nature, and deprived of supernatural gifts. Persons professing to be the disciples of Christ have spoken too much like the philosophers on this subject. As if human nature were still in its integrity, the term Freewill has always been in use among the Latins, while the Greeks were not ashamed to use a still more presumptuous term--viz. *autexousion*, as if man had still full power in himself. But since the principle entertained by all, even the vulgar, is,

that man is endued with Freewill, while some, who would be thought more skilful, know not how far its power extends; it will be necessary, first to consider the meaning of the term, and afterwards ascertain, by a simple appeal to Scripture, what man's natural power for good or evil is. The thing meant by Freewill, though constantly occurring in all writers, few have defined. Origen, however, seems to have stated the common opinion when he said, It is a power of reason to discern between good and evil; of will, to choose the one or other. Nor does Augustine differ from him when he says, It is a power of reason and will to choose the good, grace assisting,--to choose the bad, grace desisting. Bernard, while aiming at greater acuteness, speaks more obscurely, when he describes it as consent, in regard to the indestructible liberty of the wills and the inalienable judgment of reason. Anselm's definition is not very intelligible to ordinary understandings. He calls it a power of preserving rectitude on its own account. Peter Lombard, and the Schoolmen, preferred the definition of Augustine, both because it was clearer, and did not exclude divine grace, without which they saw that the will was not sufficient of itself. They however add something of their own, because they deemed it either better or necessary for clearer explanation. First, they agree that the term will (*arbitrium*) has reference to reason, whose office it is to distinguish between good and evil, and that the epithet *free* properly belongs to the will, which may incline either way. Wherefore, since liberty properly belongs to the will, Thomas Aquinas says (Part 1 Quast. 83, Art. 3), that the most congruous definition is to call Freewill an elective power, combining intelligence and appetite, but inclining more to appetite. We now perceive in what it is they suppose the faculty of Freewill to consist--viz. in reason and will. It remains to see how much they attribute to each. In general, they are wont to place under the Freewill of man only intermediate things--viz. those which pertain not to the kingdom of God, while they refer true righteousness to the special grace of God and spiritual regeneration. The author of the work, *De Vocatione Gentium*, (*On the Calling of the Gentiles*), [154] wishing to show this, describes the will as threefold--viz. sensitive,

animal, and spiritual. The two former, he says, are free to man, but the last is the work of the Holy Spirit.). The schools, however, have adopted a distinction which enumerates three kinds of freedom (see Lombard, lib. 2 Dist. 25); the first, a freedom from necessity; the second, a freedom from sin; and the third, a freedom from misery: the first naturally so inherent in man, that he cannot possibly be deprived of it; while through sin the other two have been lost. I willingly admit this distinction, except in so far as it confounds necessity with compulsion." (II Ch 2 par 4-5).

Still less can the grace be given to those who want it: "We must, therefore, repudiate the oft-repeated sentiment of Chrysostom, Whom he draws, he draws willingly; insinuating that the Lord only stretches out his hand, and waits to see whether we will be pleased to take his aid." (II Ch 3 par 10).

Calvin therefore thinks it would be better to ban the use of Freewill expression. For even St. Augustine can be ambiguous: "In another passages he is offended with those who deny Freewill; but his chief reason for this is explained when he says, only lest any one should presume so to deny freedom of will, from a desire to excuse sin. It is certain, he elsewhere admits, that without the Spirit the will of man is not free, inasmuch as it is subject to lusts which chain and master it." (II Ch 2 par 8). .

This is the miracle method of today's scientists: ambiguities allow to reject experiments of appearance contrary to the paradigm. This is essentially the case of the Sagnac experiment, but also of Miller's measurements with a Michelson interferometer as analyzed by Professor Allais. In the name of ambiguity, Calvin rejects Freewill with the words that express it.

As this process is, to say the least, cavalier, Calvin finds an even better solution: Freewill belongs to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Whoever tastes will die: "What, then, is meant by Cyprian in the passage so often lauded by Augustine, Let us glory in nothing, because nothing is ours, unless it be, that man being utterly destitute, considered in himself, should entirely depend on God? What is meant by Augustine and Eucherius, when they expound that Christ is the tree of life, and that whoso puts forth his hand to it shall live; that the choice of the will is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that he who, forsaking the grace of God, tastes of it shall die?" (II Ch 2 par 9).

The argument should not be convincing enough, because here is another one on the next page: "Here however, I must again repeat what I premised at the outset of this chapter, [159] that he who is most deeply abased and alarmed, by the consciousness of his disgrace, nakedness, want, and misery, has made the greatest progress in the knowledge of himself. Man is in no danger of taking too much from himself, provided he learns that whatever he wants is to be recovered in God. I have always been exceedingly delighted with the words of Chrysostom, The foundation of our philosophy is humility;" » (II Ch 2 par 10-11).

The search for humility has the pride for reflection. The intention ruins the action. Velázquez imagined painting the Infanta, daughter of Philip IV. But he paints what he sees in a mirror and the mirror painted on the painting brings out the king and the queen looking at the scene, precisely, from the place of the mirror that reflects it. Mind is this game of mirrors. The man looks at himself in a mirror to paint himself filled with humility. This mirror reflects the image of pride. It is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, where the progressives see first the opposition of the rich proud to the humble poor. Enormous misconceptions, for the Pharisees strove to live in poverty, and the publicans, a kind of general farmers, were for the most part very rich, like Zacchaeus.

This is the whole drama of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin. Humility can only become a show. The Elects think that they are chosen by their earthly successes, proofs of divine grace. They succeed in making fruitful their talents, in the Roman sense of money, and their talents, in the English sense of skilled, so they are chosen from God. Got mit uns! But they obviously know how to be humble, because these talents have been given to them. The mirror returns the pride! The satisfaction of the chosen one!

If there is an ambiguous word, it is predestination. It is as well to explain the objective of God. This rationalistic claim is the biggest branch, if not the trunk, of the forbidden tree of Eden. Calvin rightly proposes to distinguish the divine from the human: "The distinction is, that we have one kind of intelligence of earthly things, and another of heavenly things. By earthly things, I mean those which relate not to God and his kingdom, to true righteousness and future blessedness, but have some connection with the present life, and are in a manner confined within its boundaries. By heavenly things, I mean the pure knowledge of God, the method of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom." (II Ch 2 par 13).

Can we doubt that Creation and predestination belong first, if not only, to the divine world?

Do the concepts of good and evil relate to this mystery of Creation? Calvin is here rather embarrassed, for it must be admitted that many works written by "iniquitous and infidel" at all times are far from containing only bad ideas. Moreover, the discoveries of "the mechanical as well as the liberal arts" have nothing in common with faith. It is not the same with the philosophical developments, always conditioned by a religious vision. I include in these visions the atheism where official philosophy has been flooded for more than a century. The Elect must

make use of the works of the damned. So the talents of the damned have come to fruition! We can not, however, deny that Calvin is perfectly right to attribute these works to divine grace, since we owe everything to God.

I will quote the whole passage, for it contains a curious rejection of the doctrine of Plato's ideas. It is true that, according to the assumption attributed to Plato in an absolute sense, all things would be the image of a preexisting idea. This leaves little room for novelty, for progress. Plato rejected this absolute view of the doctrine of ideas in the *Parmenides* essentially. On the other hand, the fact that man has concepts, innate principles such as Calvin's support, is perfectly in conformity with the position of Plato, which will be taken up much later by Descartes and Kant.

“14. Next come manual and liberal arts, in learning which, as all have some degree of aptitude, the full force of human acuteness is displayed. But though all are not equally able to learn all the arts, we have sufficient evidence of a common capacity in the fact, that there is scarcely an individual who does not display intelligence in some particular art. And this capacity extends not merely to the learning of the art, but to the devising of something new, or the improving of what had been previously learned. This led Plato to adopt the erroneous idea, that such knowledge was nothing but recollection. So cogently does it oblige us to acknowledge that its principle is naturally implanted in the human mind. But while these proofs openly attest the fact of a universal reason and intelligence naturally implanted, this universality is of a kind which should lead every individual for himself to recognise it as a special gift of God. To this gratitude we have a sufficient call from the Creator himself, when, in the case of idiots, he shows what the endowments of the soul would be were it not pervaded with his light. Though natural to all, it is so in such a sense that it ought to be regarded as a gratuitous gift of his beneficence to each. Moreover, the invention, the methodical

arrangement, and the more thorough and superior knowledge of the arts, being confined to a few individuals cannot be regarded as a solid proof of common shrewdness. Still, however, as they are bestowed indiscriminately on the good and the bad, they are justly classed among natural endowments.

15. Therefore, in reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gifts, we insult the Giver. How, then, can we deny that truth must have beamed on those ancient lawgivers who arranged civil order and discipline with so much equity? Shall we say that the philosophers, in their exquisite researches and skilful description of nature, were blind? Shall we deny the possession of intellect to those who drew up rules for discourse, and taught us to speak in accordance with reason? Shall we say that those who, by the cultivation of the medical art, expended their industry in our behalf were only raving? What shall we say of the mathematical sciences? Shall we deem them to be the dreams of madmen? Nay, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without the highest admiration; an admiration which their excellence will not allow us to withhold. But shall we deem anything to be noble and praiseworthy, without tracing it to the hand of God? Far from us be such ingratitude; an ingratitude not chargeable even on heathen poets, who acknowledged that philosophy and laws, and all useful arts were the inventions of the gods. Therefore, since it is manifest that men whom the Scriptures term carnal, are so acute and clear-sighted in the investigation of inferior things, their example should teach us how many gifts the Lord has left in possession of human nature, notwithstanding of its having been despoiled of the true good.

16. Moreover, let us not forget that there are most excellent blessings which the Divine Spirit dispenses to whom he will for the common benefit of mankind. For if the skill and knowledge required for the construction of the Tabernacle behaved to be imparted to Bezaleel and Aholiab, by the Spirit of God (Exod. 31:2; 35:30), it is not strange that the knowledge of those things which are of the highest excellence in human life is said to be communicated to us by the Spirit. Nor is there any ground for asking what concourse the Spirit can have with the ungodly, who are altogether alienated from God? For what is said as to the Spirit dwelling in believers only, is to be understood of the Spirit of holiness by which we are consecrated to God as temples. Notwithstanding of this, He fills, moves, and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit, and that according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation. But if the Lord has been pleased to assist us by the work and ministry of the ungodly in physics, dialectics, mathematics, and other similar sciences, let us avail ourselves of it, lest, by neglecting the gifts of God spontaneously offered to us, we be justly punished for our sloth. Lest any one, however, should imagine a man to be very happy merely because, with reference to the elements of this world, he has been endued with great talents for the investigation of truth, we ought to add, that the whole power of intellect thus bestowed is, in the sight of God, fleeting and vain whenever it is not based on a solid foundation of truth. Augustine (*supra*, sec. 4 and 12), to whom, as we have observed, the Master of Sentences (*lib. 2 Dist. 25*), and the Schoolmen, are forced to subscribe, says most correctly that as the gratuitous gifts bestowed on man were withdrawn, so the natural gifts which remained were corrupted after the fall. Not that they can be polluted in themselves in so far as they proceed from God, but that they have ceased to be pure to polluted man, lest he should by their means obtain any praise." (*II Ch 2 par 14-15-16*).

Calvin's position on Freewill comes not from a conception of good and evil. Good and evil, in the Christian sense, have nothing to do with

earthly happiness and misfortune. Calvin's position is perfectly orthodox. Job's misfortunes have no relation to any sin. Man as animals seeks for material well-being: "For this appetite is not properly a movement of the will, but natural inclination; and this good is not one of virtue or righteousness, but of condition--viz. that the individual may feel comfortable. In fine, how much soever man may desire to obtain what is good, he does not follow it. There is no man who would not be pleased with eternal blessedness; and yet, without the impulse of the Spirit, no man aspires to it. Since, then, the natural desire of happiness in man no more proves the freedom of the will, than the tendency in metals and stones to attain the perfection of their nature, let us consider, in other respects, whether the will is so utterly vitiated and corrupted in every part as to produce nothing but evil, or whether it retains some portion uninjured, and productive of good desires." (II Ch 2 par 26).

Here again is a characteristic example of what has been called a semantic escalation. Calvin passes from the yoke to the prison. The slave was subject to the will of his master. If this submission had been a prison, how could many of them have been freed after having amassed a fortune sufficient to cover the cost? Serfdom was never absolute. Epictetus was a slave and was able to take liberty and time to become a great philosopher. There is no serfdom that doesn't leaves a share of freedom. Servitude of sin can not be a negation of Freewill. It is therefore absolutely false to claim: "every thing proceeding from the corrupt nature of man (is) damnable." (Title of II chapter 3).

By virtue of his opposition to Plato's doctrine, which is unfounded, Calvin shows that he adheres, in fact, to the materialist system of Aristotle, and thus to most Thomist theses. This is what appears unambiguously here: "Everything, therefore, which we have from nature is flesh. Any possible doubt which might exist on the subject is removed by the words of Paul (Eph. 4:23), where, after a description of

the old man, who, he says, is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, he bids us be renewed in the spirit of our mind." (II Ch 3 par 1).

In rejecting Plato's system, Aristotle also cut the bridges towards the concepts of mind. Between the world of the concepts of Plato, Decartes and Kant as well, and the human body, there is the mind and its access precisely to transcendence. Calvin therefore remains in the Thomist movement.

We have seen that, for Calvin, the last judgment does not in any way relate to works, but to the faith given by grace to the predestined, so that the verdict is fixed in advance. But the verdict is not only known to God, but also to men, which is at least disturbing: "Still, the surest and easiest answer to the objection is, that those are not common endowments of nature, but special gifts of God, which he distributes in divers forms, and, in a definite measure, to men otherwise profane. For which reason, we hesitate not, in common language, to say, that one is of a good, another of a vicious nature; though we cease not to hold that both are placed under the universal condition of human depravity. All we mean is that God has conferred on the one a special grace which he has not seen it meet to confer on the other. When he was pleased to set Saul over the kingdom, he made him as it were a new man. This is the thing meant by Plato, when, alluding to a passage in the Iliad, he says, that the children of kings are distinguished at their birth by some special qualities--God, in kindness to the human race, often giving a spirit of heroism to those whom he destines for empire. In this way, the great leaders celebrated in history were formed." (II Ch 6 par 4).

Now it is written, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; deliver, and it shall be delivered to you "(Luke 6:37). Who can affirm that one man is damned, another chosen and saved? Judgment belongs to God. Here we reach the most dramatic consequence of the thesis of Luther and Calvin's

predestination. No one can say that Judas, already suspended from his rope, has not had a last appeal for a pardon to divine grace? One might think that this is unlikely given the words of Jesus of Nazareth: "It would have been better for this man never to be born!" (Mt 26:24). But who dares to judge?

"Men are indeed to be taught that the favour of God is offered, without exception, to all who ask it; but since those only begin to ask whom heaven by grace inspires, even this minute portion of praise must not be withheld from him. It is the privilege of the Elect to be regenerated by the Spirit of God, and then placed under his guidance and government... No man can come to me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him" (II Ch 3 par 10).

We subscribe gladly to these statements. It seems that for Calvin, the Elect who has received grace does not have the slightest possibility of departing from it. We find the negation of all human will. St. Chrysostom, however, affirmed necessity. Moreover, "attraction" does not presume in any way the inanity of the will, to refuse in particular. It was the case of the philosopher Alain, undoubtedly attracted by the Catholic religion, but who always refused to take the step, at least until his last writings. After that? Who can say?

After such lengthy developments, one might think that Calvin expressed his conviction. Does he think that we would still be far from accepting his negation of Freewill and the necessity of works? For here is another argument in the form of a conclusion, but it is not one. There is still far from the end of this book!

"We have now an attestation by Augustine to the truth which we are specially desirous to maintain--viz. that the grace offered by the Lord is not merely one which every individual has full liberty of choosing to receive or reject, but a grace which produces in the heart both choice and

will: so that all the good works which follow after are its fruit and effect; the only will which yields obedience being the will which grace itself has made. In another place, Augustine uses these words, Every good work in us is performed only by grace, (August. Ep. 105). In saying elsewhere that the will is not taken away by grace, but out of bad is changed into good, and after it is good is assisted,--he only means, that man is not drawn as if by an extraneous impulse without the movement of the heart, but is inwardly affected so as to obey from the heart. Declaring that grace is given specially and gratuitously to the Elect, he writes in this way to Boniface: We know that Divine grace is not given to all men, and that to those to whom it is given, it is not given either according to the merit of works, or according to the merit of the will, but by free grace: in regard to those to whom it is not given, we know that the not giving of it is a just judgment from God, (August. ad Bonifac. Ep. 106).” (II Ch 3 par 13-14).

Calvin must have felt some reluctance: “Should any one wish a clearer reply, let him take the following:--God works in his Elect in two ways: inwardly, by his Spirit; outwardly, by his Word. By his Spirit illuminating their minds, and training their hearts to the practice of righteousness, he makes them new creatures, while, by his Word, he stimulates them to long and seek for this renovation. In both, he exerts the might of his hand in proportion to the measure in which he dispenses them. The Word, when addressed to the reprobate, though not effectual for their amendment, has another use. It urges their consciences now, and will render them more inexcusable on the day of judgment. Thus, our Saviour, while declaring that none can come to him but those whom the Father draws, and that the Elect come after they have heard and learned of the Father (John 6:44, 45)” (II Ch 5 par 5).

One finds the judgment whose cause is heard before the act. The unfortunate ungodly will then only find that they were damned from

the beginning of time. And in addition they are inexcusable to have been damned. I am seriously worried about the obscurity of Calvin's logic. Unfortunately I am not more convinced, except that the presumed clarity illuminates the contradiction.

Calvin takes many examples in the Old Testament to support his doctrine. They concern the realization of human vows on this very Earth, as of defeating the enemy. In the same way, the pains afflicted to men would be in this very world. This is an enormous confusion. Indeed, the parables of Jesus of Nazareth concern only Heaven, the life of the hereafter in no way the hurts and misfortunes of our earthly world. The idea that evil, sin and misfortune are linked is deeply rooted in Calvin's mind, even though he defends himself from it several times. "These things must happen," Christ said in speaking of the dramas of this earthly world. They have nothing to do with the afterlife. Similarly, regeneration does not, of course, concern the human, material condition, but the soul, the heart.

Calvin's method is revealed particularly a few pages later: "These expressions, therefore, it is said, indicate that while, in the matter of grace, we give the first place to God, a secondary place must be assigned to our agency. If the only thing here insisted on were, that good works are termed ours, I, in my turn, would reply, that the bread which we ask God to give us is also termed ours. What, then, can be inferred from the title of possession, but simply that, by the kindness and free gift of Gods that becomes ours which in other respects is by no means due to us" (II Ch 5 par 14).

Of course, we ask God to give us our daily bread. But, just as in works, an act is demanded of man. The bread does not fall from Heaven, at least in general, if we think of the Exodus. I would be a little ironic in reminding Calvin the Genesis: "You will gain your bread by the sweat of your brow." Calvin proceeds by exclusion, that is, he makes the

utterances absolute. It eliminates any complementary possibility. The gift would be absolute, and man would have only to receive the bread. In reality, the gift is certain, but it takes the act in addition.

Calvin makes no distinction in the Law, whether of Moses or of the Gospe: "that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, (Rom. 10:4); and, again, that ministers of the new testament were not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life, (2 Cor. 3:6)." (II Ch 7 par 2) . Christ illuminates the Law, certainly, but it is by another Law and not by His will alone. This nuance is essential because it leaves room for the human act, for works, contrary to Calvin's thesis. The acts of salvation are not in accordance with the Law of Moses, but with respect for the Law of Christ and this Law is not written in letters: it is the Law of Love!

Yet this Law of Love is already inscribed in the spirit of the Law of Moses. The Law of Christ is a framework that surrounds each of the Laws of Moses. The Law of Moses is certainly not bad in itself. Could Calvin have gone against the "Thou shalt will not kill"? One understands that murder by a chosen one is a sin, as for the damned, but he would be forgiven in advance of the Elect, since he is predestined!

It is not the Law that must be respected, it must be respected with love. It is the spirit of the Law and it brings the Law to life. This is what St. Augustine explains in the *Diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* (I, 1.17): "The law is the only letter for those who have learned to read it and can not accomplish it. It is then that it condemns and kills [because it is not applied must we repeat here]". The Spirit vivifies, for "the spirit of charity, which is that of the New Testament," gives the fulfillment of the Law. The passage of St. Paul actually enables us to understand the history of salvation in a sense totally contrary to Calvin's thesis. And this is the explanation of St. Augustine to which Calvin refers so completely elsewhere.

A little further on, Calvin resumed his idea of condemning the damned by the mere fact of the law, but he claimed to rely on St. Augustine to confirm his thesis. Now, Augustine does not speak here of the damned, but of the necessity of the Spirit of grace. In no case is there any question of predetermination of beneficiaries of this Spirit of grace. "All that remains for the Law, is to arm the wrath of God for the destruction of the sinner; for by itself it can do nothing but accuse, condemn, and destroy him. Thus Augustine says, If the Spirit of grace be absent, the law is present only to convict and slay us." (II Ch 7 par 6). In other words, the strict application of the law, as the Pharisees do, without the Spirit of grace, which is the application of the Law of Love, leads to the death of the soul on the day of the Judgment.

We are invited in the following page to read a long series of quotations. St. Augustine is nevertheless very clear. It is not the law that is the source of sin; it is first of all our weak nature that makes us succumb. It is not in any way the law that is the source of condemnation, but the sin of not following the Law. However, it is not enough to apply it with all possible rigor, it is necessary to act by Love, and Love of God first.

« There are many passages in Augustine, as to the utility of the law in leading us to implore Divine assistance. Thus he writes to Hilary, The law orders, that we, after attempting to do what is ordered and so feeling our weakness under the law, may learn to implore the help of grace. In like manner, he writes to Asellius, The utility of the law is, that it convinces man of his weakness, and compels him to apply for the medicine of grace, which is in Christ. In like manner, he says to Innocentius Romanus, The law orders; grace supplies the power of acting. Again, to Valentinus, God enjoins what we cannot do, in order that we may know what we have to ask of him. Again, The law was given, that it might make you guilty--being made guilty might fear;

fearing, might ask indulgence, not presume on your own strength.” (II Ch 7 par 9).

A passage from St Augustine may seem ambiguous: “God commands what we can not do”. What we can not do is not the impossibility of applying the law. The Pharisees respected the Law perfectly, Jesus of Nazareth said it. What is impossible, where grace is needed, is to do more than to apply the Law, is to obtain the Spirit of grace which is to apply the Law of total Love; “Come and follow me”. The Law of Love of Jesus of Nazareth is absolute in some way and therefore inaccessible to man. Our acts of charity will always be minute with regard to the infinity of divine Love, if you allow this analytical way of expressing my thought. The divine mercy is to take them into consideration. They are not negligible for God who so wishes.

As for saying that the Law is given only for the damned, this is a reversal of values. The Law is the criterion of judgment of all men, but of course St. Paul says that it can only condemn sinners who refuse to apply it. And condemnation is essentially, if not exclusively, directed at the law of Love .”This office seems to be especially in the view of the Apostle, when he says, That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, (1 Tim. 1:9, 10). He thus indicates that it is a restraint on unruly lusts that would otherwise burst all bonds.” (II Ch 7 par 11).

It is very clear here that Calvin limits himself to the Law of the Old Testament. This appears even more clearly on the following page where Calvin quotes a passage from Deuteronomy: “Moses has admirably shown that : ...For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life,

(Deut. 32:46, 47).” (II Ch 7 par 13). The Law is not there to kill. Moreover, it gives life. We must understand: for here below in the Old Testament, and for eternal life, according to the Law of Love of the New Testament. It is the Law of the Old Testament, enlightened by the word of Jesus of Nazareth.

Calvin then devoted a few lines to the ceremonies. He makes the parallel with the Law. But he points out a radical difference. If the new celebrations which result from the New Testament may correspond to feasts of the Old Testament, so if the break is not complete, the feasts and sacrifices of animals and a multitude of Jewish practices are either abandoned or rejected. In particular, the Jews practice “more a confession than an expiation of sins” (II Ch 7 par 17).

It was an opportunity to come back to another aspect of the Law: the natural law: “Moreover, the very things contained in the two tables are, in a manner, dictated to us by that internal law, which, as has been already said, is in a manner written and stamped on every heart.” (II Ch 8 par 1). He explains the need for the Law to strengthen the natural law: “Therefore, as a necessary remedy, both for our dullness and our contumacy, the Lord has given us his written Law, which, by its sure attestations, removes the obscurity of the law of nature” (id.).

All this would be perfect if, at last, Calvin did not return again and again to his morbid vision of man: “taking a survey of our powers, we see that they are not only unequal to fulfil the Law, but are altogether null.” (II Ch 8 par 2). It is the negation, once again, of every form of Freewill by making absolute human weakness and by rejecting that the divine power by its grace can transform this nullity, effective with regard to its infinite goodness, into acts liable to the judgment. For there is no judgment without three factors: a law, a judge and an act to be judged according to the law. For Calvin, the act simply does not exist.

And yet, Calvin is going to speak to us about acts. He distinguishes between internal works and external works: "The Pharisees having instilled into the people the erroneous idea that the Law was fulfilled by every one who did not in external act do anything against the Law, he pronounces this a most dangerous delusion, and declares that an immodest look is adultery, and that hatred of a brother is murder. (Matth. 5, 21- 44)" (II Ch 8 par 7).

In his attempt to take the texts literally, Calvin came to misunderstand the nature of the natural law: "Thou shalt not kill, the generality of men will merely consider as an injunction to abstain from all injury and all wish to inflict injury. I hold that it moreover means, that we are to aid our neighbour's life by every means in our power. And not to assert without giving my reasons I prove it thus: God forbids us to injure or hurt a brother, because he would have his life to be dear and precious to us; and, therefore, when he so forbids, he, at the same time, demands all the offices of charity which can contribute to his preservation.» (II Ch 8 par 9).

Now, natural law, common to men, is not only not to kill one's neighbor, but to love him, at least to help him when he is in need. Human solidarity is incarnated at the heart of natural law, at the heart of man. The word of Jesus of Nazareth goes beyond this solidarity which belongs to appearance. Besides respecting the Law, we must love our neighbor in the love of God.

This goes well beyond solidarity. And the first consequence of this love of God and of the neighbor, one does not go without the other as the progressives have wished to believe, the first consequence is to spread the word of Jesus of Nazareth everywhere and always and the faith in eternal life. How can we say that we love God if we do not do everything to share our faith first? Material poverty is fully relative. There are regions and situations where it actually seems bottomless,

absolute, but the most dramatic of poverty is the lack of faith, the absence of faith. Give food to the miserable victims of cataclysms or of overcrowding, this is a human obligation, a natural obligation, in front of which even the Christian can obviously not shy away, no more than the other men, but the message of Christ concerns a much more vivid misery in spite of the practical appearances in this world: the misery of faith which is almost general and bottomless.

And it is certainly not, as Calvin maintains, by cries of fear that faith can spread: "Without the fear of God, men do not even observe justice and charity among themselves." (II Ch 8 par 11). Sowing the fear of God will be harvesting the despair. And the despair feeds the hatred.

It is certainly not by fear that men are governed. All the absolute powers, and the Terror first, ultimately failed. "He shows how, in the fear of his name, we are to conduct ourselves towards our fellow-men. Hence, as related by the Evangelists (Mt. 22:37; Luke 10:27), our Saviour summed up the whole Law in two heads--viz. to love the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves." (II Ch 8 par 11). The reign of terror has only led to destruction and death. It must be remarked, on the one hand, that the law thus expressed can not be the cause of perdition, as Calvin has repeatedly said so far; on the contrary, it opens the way to salvation. On the other hand, it is absurd to attribute to God the idea of reigning by terror. God is Love and wants to put love in the heart of men by this same love, certainly not by fear as Calvin maintains. He remains confined in the vision of the God of the Old Testament.

The rationalism inherent in Calvin's thought leads him to explain this fundamental and exclusive law of Christianity: "Scripture notes a twofold equity on which this commandment is founded. Man is both the image of God and our flesh. Wherefore, if we would not violate the image of God, we must hold the person of man sacred--if we would not divest ourselves of humanity we must cherish our own flesh" (II Ch 8

par 40). Does true love really need to be supported by reasoning, so just they are?

In a passage that follows, Calvin might have been the antidote to Progressism. The second commandment dispenses by no means of respecting the first one "You see that conscience and faith unfeigned are placed at the head, in other words, true piety; and that from this charity is derived." (II Ch 8 par 51). Moreover, throughout this passage, Calvin does not attack the Papists, but essentially Servetus and Osiander, with however a small reserve: "For he was appointed both Prophet, King, and Priest; though little were gained by holding the names unaccompanied by a knowledge of the end and use. These too are spoken of in the Papacy, but frigidly, and with no great benefit, the full meaning comprehended under each title not being understood." (II Ch 15 par 1).

The Protestants, and Max Weber in the first place, who think they find in material successes, and first in wealth, a proof of being counted among the Elect, rely in part on this passage of Calvin: "We must, therefore, know that the happiness which is promised to us in Christ does not consist in external advantages--such as leading a joyful and tranquil life, abounding in wealth, being secure against all injury, and having an affluence of delights, such as the flesh is wont to long for--but properly belongs to the heavenly life. As in the world the prosperous and desirable condition of a people consists partly in the abundance of temporal good and domestic peace, and partly in the strong protection which gives security against external violence; so Christ also enriches his people with all things necessary to the eternal salvation of their souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unassailable by all the attacks of spiritual foes." (II Ch 15 par 4).

Calvin returns again and again on his obsessions: the Law for the damned and the justification without the works. But this time, the logic

is hardly ensured: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, (Gal. 4:4, 5). For to what end that subjection, unless that he obtained justification for us by undertaking to perform what we were unable to pay? Hence that imputation of righteousness without works, of which Paul treats (Rom. 4:5), the righteousness found in Christ alone being accepted as if it were ours." (II Ch 17 par 5). How could the redemption through the blood of Christ exclude the necessity of works? How can Calvin allow himself to prevent God from wishing both redemption, free gift, and works for salvation? Even from the human point of view, on what logical basis could the exclusion of works be based on the free redemption? It is a pure semantic escalation of Calvin.

The rest does not enlighten us any more. Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth stated: "My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden light" (Mt 11:30). Under the pen of Calvin this light burden becomes out of our power: "Secondly, Because it is not only difficult, but altogether beyond our strength and ability, to fulfill the demands of the Law, if we look only to ourselves and consider what is due to our merits, no ground of hope remains, but we lie forsaken of God under eternal death." (III Ch 2 par 1). One imagines the poor Calvinists weeping their lives during their damnation, and going whipping like the penitents of the Philippines.

Jesus of Nazareth also declared just before: "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I proclaim your praise: what you hid from the wise and the learned, you revealed to the little ones." Calvin takes up this argument to refute the Church's usefulness in matters of faith: "Faith consists in the knowledge of God and Christ (John 17:3), not in reverence for the Church...., provided, in regard to things unknown, they assent to the authority and judgment of the Church: as if Scripture did not uniformly teach, that with faith understanding is conjoined.... The Evangelists describe many as having believed, although they were only roused to

admiration by the miracles, and went no farther than to believe that Christ was the promised Messiah, without being at all imbued with Evangelical doctrine." (III Ch 2 par 3-5). Now, by his works, Calvin is the ever-present proof of the necessity of the Church for the Faith. False prophets abound. We must constantly fight against the heresies which prosper always and everywhere. Everyone does not have the necessary knowledge to avoid falling into the traps that the Evil one ingeniously incorporates into tempting words.

Men have many activities on this Earth, many of them necessary for the survival of the human race. All cannot spend their time thinking. Besides, is faith a solitary introspection? Is it not rather a sharing of thoughts, and of acts, too? For Calvin, of course, only the intellectual elite capable of thinking by himself can aspire to salvation: "But this docility, with a desire of further progress, is widely different from the gross ignorance in which those sluggishly indulge who are contented with the implicit faith of the Papists. If Paul severely condemns those who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, how much more sharply ought those to be rebuked who avowedly affect to know nothing? (2 Tim. 3, 7)" (III Ch 2 par 5). Unfortunately, this intellectual elite first sank into atheism in the nineteenth century, then into the abyss of scientific absurdities in the twentieth century. Previously, as we shall see, it had got lost in a multiplication of Protestant sects. Calvinism is essentially individual.

One might admire, however, that Calvin seems to accept that the reprobates of the predestination may receive the grace of faith! We see many inveterate sinners who seem suddenly illuminated by faith! Besides, one may wonder who can afford to judge that these men are sinners? But one is quickly undeceived. It is to be better crushed under their turpitude! Besides, this faith can only be lapsed and transitory: "I am aware it seems unaccountable to some how faith is attributed to the reprobate, seeing that it is declared by Paul to be one of the fruits of

election; and yet the difficulty is easily solved: for though none are enlightened into faith, and truly feel the efficacy of the Gospel, with the exception of those who are fore-ordained to salvation, yet experiment shows that the reprobate are sometimes affected in a way so similar to the Elect, that even in their own judgment there is no difference between them. Hence it is not strange, that by the Apostle a taste of heavenly gifts, and by Christ himself a temporary faith, is ascribed to them. Not that they truly perceive the power of spiritual grace and the sure light of faith; but the Lord, the better to convict them, and leave them without excuse, instills into their minds such a sense of his goodness as can be felt without the Spirit of adoption. Should it be objected, that believers have no stronger testimony to assure them of their adoption, I answer, that though there is a great resemblance and affinity between the Elect of God and those who are impressed for a time with a fading faith, yet the Elect alone have that full assurance which is extolled by Paul, and by which they are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Therefore, as God regenerates the Elect only for ever by incorruptible seed, as the seed of life once sown in their hearts never perishes," (III Ch 2 par 11).

The God of Calvin is not only terrifying, but he is also terribly wicked. Not only the unhappy reprobate is condemned, but the God of Calvin lets him believe he could be saved! Fortunately, Calvin's logic is rather weak. To make the reprobate believe that he could be saved, the God of Calvin will naturally fill him with earthly wealths, as the Elect. Finally, material assets have no part in salvation, on the contrary, since, according to Calvin himself, wealth would come to the Elect as well as to the reprobate. It is very embarrassing also for the thesis of Max Weber!

It is now time to eradicate the Catholic Church: "Therefore, when we say, that faith must rest on a free promise, we deny not that believers accept and embrace the word of God in all its parts, but we point to the promise of mercy as its special object. Believers, indeed, ought to recognize God as the judge and avenger of wickedness; and yet mercy is

the object to which they properly look, since he is exhibited to their contemplation as good and ready to forgive, plenteous in mercy, slow to anger, good to all, and shedding his tender mercies over all his works. Ps. 86:5; 103:8; 145:8, 9). I stay not to consider the rabid objections of Pighius, and others like-minded, who inveigh against this restriction, as rending faith, and laying hold of one of its fragments. I admit, as I have already said, that the general object of faith (as they express it) is the truth of God, whether he threatens or gives hope of his favor. Accordingly, the Apostle attributes it to faith in Noah, that he feared the destruction of the world, when as yet it was not seen (Heb. 11:17). If fear of impending punishment was a work of faith, threatening ought not to be excluded in defining it. This is indeed true; but we are unjustly and calumniously charged with denying that faith has respect to the whole word of God. We only mean to maintain these two points,--that faith is never decided until it attain to a free promise; and that the only way in which faith reconciles us to God is by uniting us with Christ. Both are deserving of notice. We are inquiring after a faith which separates the children of God from the reprobate, believers from unbelievers" (III Ch 2 par 29-30).

But who discerns, if not God. Calvin points the unfaithful! Calvin condemns the unfaithful! Calvin burnt Michel Servet alive!

Calvin chains with a lash of insults. Is it to that same Pighius? It is difficult to know who has utter this idea that Calvin criticizes thoroughly. How to deny the essential place of the Holy Spirit in the gifts? Who was able to oppose it? "But they still exclaim, that there is great temerity in our presuming to glory in possessing the Spirit of God. [302] Who could believe that these men, who desire to be thought the masters of the world, could be so stupid as to err thus grossly in the very first principles of religion? To me, indeed, it would be incredible, did not their own writings make it manifest. Paul declares that those only are the sons of God who are led by his Spirit (Rom. 8:14); these men would

have those who are the sons of God to be led by their own, and void of the divine Spirit. He tells us that we call God our Father in terms dictated by the Spirit, who alone bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God (Rom. 8:16)" (III Ch 2 par 39).

Maybe it's Sorbonics? For a little further on, Calvin rejects one of their theses, which is contrary to the constant teaching of the Catholic Church: "For what the Schoolmen say as to the priority of love to faith and hope is a mere dream (see Sent. Lib. 3 Dist. 25, &c.) since it is faith alone that first engenders love. How much better is Bernard, The testimony of conscience, which Paul calls the rejoicing' of believers, I believe to consist in three things. It is necessary, first of all, to believe that you cannot have remission of sins except by the indulgence of God; secondly, that you cannot have any good work at all unless he also give it; lastly, that you cannot by any works merit eternal life unless it also be freely given, (Bernard, Serm. 1 in Annuntiatione)." (III Ch 2 par 40).

One might even describe as a heretic the idea of passing charity first, for without faith, charity is called solidarity. Now, solidarity has no connection with the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. It is not even a specific requirement of man. Solidarity exists in some animal species as well. We see that this foundation of progressive heresy is not new. At least it has never been taught by the Catholic Church!

In addressing the chapter of punishment, Calvin sends his most lively criticism to the Anabaptists. This hard moment spent, we come to the position of the Catholic Church. I will pass on this long text of Calvin in a field which has been the subject of debates since the early days of the Christian Church and has undergone variations more than evolutions.

Calvin takes umbrage with these variations to criticize the practice, then exclusively current, of auricular confession in the Catholic Church. "In consequence of that crime, Nectarius, the bishop of that church--a man

famous for learning and sanctity--abolished the custom of confessing. Here, then, let these asses prick up their ears. If auricular confession was a divine law, how could Nectarius have dared to abolish or remodel it? This abrogation is clearly attested in so many passages by Chrysostom, who lived at Constantinople, and was himself prelate of the church, that it is strange they can venture to maintain the contrary: Tell your sins, says he, that you may efface them: if you blush to tell another what sins you have committed, tell them daily in your soul. I say not, tell them to your fellow-servant who may upbraid you, but tell them to God who cures them." (III Ch 4 par 40-41).

Calvin then tackles both the prayers for the deaths and the possibility of the intercession of the deceased: "We have numerous, and sometimes long narratives, of their mourning and sepulchral rites, but not one word is said of prayers. But the more important the matter was, the more they ought to have dwelt upon it." however "Augustine relates in his Confessions, that his mother, Monica, earnestly entreated to be remembered when the solemn rites at the altar". Calvin rejects this pretension for him stupid : " doubtless an old woman's wish, which her son did not bring to the test of Scripture, but from natural affection wished others to approve. ". The opinion of St. Augustine, yet so revered by Calvin when it comes to predestination and salvation without works, is here bluntly rejected: "His book, De Cura pro Mortals Agenda, on showing care for the dead, is so full of doubt, that its coldness may well extinguish the heat of a foolish zeal". (III Ch 5 par 10).

The most surprising occurs in Chapter VII of Book III "The life of a christian man." Calvin returns to the works, and finally recognizes that we will be judged according to our acts: "Let this, then, be our method of showing good-will and kindness, considering that, in regard to everything which God has bestowed upon us, and by which we can aid our neighbour, we are his stewards, and are bound to give account of our stewardship". (III Ch 7 par 5).

And the only law in this matter is that inferred by St. Paul: "If I have not charity, I have nothing." What Calvin reminds us very justly: « moreover, that the only right way of administration is that which is regulated by love.». (idem).

On the contrary, it is more difficult to understand how God, infinitely good, could, under any circumstances whatsoever, have the sole intention of putting us the sticks in our wheels when we should be tempted not to do His will. Calvin takes up the Old Testament view of an avenger God punishing men. It is true that this vision is repeated on several occasions by St. Paul. Nevertheless, the misfortunes of this World, which occur to us, do not enter into the divine will with regard to men; they enter into the mystery of creation: "Do not be frightened, for it must happen". (St. Matthew 24-6 and Mark 13-7). St. Luke, very close to St. Paul, takes a similar theme at the beginning of Chapter 13, with a very Pauline threat: "Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." The only death that Jesus of Nazareth evokes is, in reality, the death of the soul by sin. Atheists die in bed most often and without the slightest suffering: their hope does not surpass their ashes.

Calvin retains only the literal meaning. God sows the pitfalls in the life of the Elect to bring him back to holiness: "The heart also, engrossed with avarice, ambition, and lust, is weighed down and cannot rise above them. In short, the whole soul, ensnared by the allurements of the flesh, seeks its happiness on the earth. To meet this disease, the Lord makes

his people sensible of the vanity of the present life, by a constant proof of its miseries. Thus, that they may not promise themselves deep and lasting peace in it, he often allows them to be assailed by war, tumult, or rapine, or to be disturbed by other injuries." (III Ch 9 par 1).

The Elect is therefore filled with wealths, but it is for his misfortune in this world. Max Weber's thesis is reversed!

Curiously, Calvin applies a principle of Aristotle to the soul: "But everything longs for permanent existence. I admit this, and therefore contend that we ought to look to future immortality, where we may obtain that fixed condition which nowhere appears on the earth. For Paul admirably enjoins believers to hasten cheerfully to death, not because they would be unclothed, but clothed upon, (2 Cor. 5, 2)" (III Ch 9 par 5).

What is true for the inertia of material bodies has no meaning in the realm of the mind. If men naturally have a conservative tendency, human thoughts are ephemeral in nature, theories are always doomed to disappear. Only the followers of Islam persist in believing Aristotle's theses taken up by the Quran and the Muslim tradition, for them the Earth is still the immobile center of the World around which the Moon and Sun each rotate on its orbital sphere. We saw that is was unfortunately also the position of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Calvin then comes back to the problem of justification. It seems again to recognize the value of works for justification: "In the same manner, a man will be said to be justified by works, if in his life there can be found a purity and holiness which merits an attestation of righteousness at the throne of God, or if by the perfection of his works he can answer and satisfy the divine justice. On the contrary, a man will be justified by faith when, excluded from the righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God

not as a sinner, but as righteous. Thus we simply interpret justification, as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as if we were righteous; and we say that this justification consists in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ." (III Ch 11 par 2).

In fact, Calvin immediately reduced the works to nothing by a particularly specious argument, and always by referring to St. Paul. "In regard to the use of the term with reference to the present subject, when Paul speaks of the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, (Gal. 3:8), what other meaning can you give it than that God imputes righteousness by faith? Again, when he says, that he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus, (Rom. 3:26), what can the meaning be, if not that God, in consideration of their faith, frees them from the condemnation which their wickedness deserves? This appears still more plainly at the conclusion, when he exclaims, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Rom. 8:33, 34). For it is just as if he had said, Who shall accuse those whom God has acquitted? Who shall condemn those for whom Christ pleads? To justify, therefore, is nothing else than to acquit from the charge of guilt, as if innocence were proved. Hence, when God justifies us through the intercession of Christ, he does not acquit us on a proof of our own innocence, but by an imputation of righteousness, so that though not righteous in ourselves, we are deemed righteous in Christ. Thus it is said, in Paul's discourse in the Acts, Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, (Acts 13:38, 39). You see that after remission of sins justification is set down by way of explanation; you see plainly that it is used for acquittal; you see how it cannot be obtained by the works of the law; you see that it is entirely through the interposition

of Christ; you see that it is obtained by faith; you see, in fine, that satisfaction intervenes, since it is said that we are justified from our sins by Christ. Thus when the publican is said to have gone down to his house justified, (Luke 18:14), it cannot be held that he obtained this justification by any merit of works. All that is said is, that after obtaining the pardon of sins he was regarded in the sight of God as righteous. He was justified, therefore, not by any approval of works, but by gratuitous acquittal on the part of God." (III Ch 11 par 3-4).

Works are annihilated by the omnipotence of God, which, it is true, has no need of it. But did he need man in the sense of necessity? In no way obviously. Calvin denies the effect of works and the Freewill, which is the origin of them, for he places himself on a level of rational appearance, although he has forbidden himself from it. Causality certainly reflects the total knowledge of God from the Creation from the beginning. But this very thought is an anthropomorphism. It is to attribute to God a rational, scientific knowledge, like that which man seeks to attain in all spheres, including theology, regardless of Calvin. God does not need such knowledge. The reflection is not identity. Moreover, Calvin adheres completely to the rationalism by refusing to admit the possibility of mystery in the nature of man and essentially as regards the Freewill. Freewill escapes rationalism. Freewill does not enter into the causality of the universe in which we live. Man can not imagine a phenomenon without a cause. Modern physicists have well imagined a stochastic world, claiming that it escapes causality. It is really stupid, for if the universe rests on a probabilistic system, this is a particular nature of determinism. Its nature is to be stochastic. This determination is in total contradiction with its supposed nature, since it is a form determined in itself. This is an insurmountable paradox, a proof of the absurdity in which modern physics has collapsed.

How, in a world where causal deductions are necessary, although without final outcome, how can exist phenomena that escape the

causality? This is the mystery of man. Perhaps, precisely, it is necessary to link this mystery with the fact that the causal search is endless and thus to go back to the Creation, to the mystery of Creation!

Contrary to his intention to give no limit to the divine power, Calvin comes to deny the possibility for God to have created a world containing a mystery. It is in fact to deny the very mystery of Creation and make it a phenomenon that would be rationally accessible to man. What they have, incidentally, claimed to achieve with the monstrous stupidity of the Big Bang and the moment 0 of the Universe.

Alongside the rational vision, which makes him deny the Freewill, Calvin considers works only with regard to the Law. It refers of course to the many texts of St. Paul which denies that the respect of the Law allows the justification of the man: "The Apostle says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, (Phil. 3:8, 9)." (III Ch 11 par 13).

The mess results from the meaning of the word Law. If it is only the rules and prohibitions of the Old Testament, Calvin is obviously right. Jesus of Nazareth did not spare his accusations against the Pharisees who made it a point of honor to respect Jewish laws. It is to this attitude that St. Paul refers. Now, the Gospels doubtless fulfill the Jewish laws by making it dependent on a superior law, constantly announced by Jesus of Nazareth: the law of Love. This is what St. Paul says himself: "If I have not love, I have nothing." The saving works are obviously not linked to the respect of the Jewish laws, or of any legal corpus whatsoever, but first of all to the respect of the law of Love. It is in this sense that the only works that matter are linked to the Law of Love.

There is no contradiction in the letters of St. Paul. Calvin is obsessed with the word law as representing human rules, in fact worthless for salvation if they do not fit within the framework of the law of Love. But precisely works that come within the framework of the law of love announced by the Christ are a necessity for salvation. Faith alone is certainly not enough: "It is not those who cry Lord, Lord, who enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my father (Matthew 7:21): Others as I have loved you." Taking the word law in the restrictive sense of the Old Testament, Calvin gave a literal interpretation of the Letters of St. Paul, and was led to heresy. This position prevented him from seeing that the works can be linked to something other than the Old Testament laws. He would have been inspired to remember this other passage of St. Paul: "The letter kills, the spirit vivifies" (2 Cor. 3: 6).

Further, after a reply to the "Sorbonics", Calvin states his position even more clearly: the works relate to the application of the Law. For Calvin, love of neighbor is not within the framework of the Law. It is the requirement of the Gospel and not a law: "In the Epistle to the Romans, comparing the Law and the Gospel, he says, Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which does those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,--If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, (Rom. 10:5, 6:9). Do you see how he makes the distinction between the Law and the Gospel to be, that the former gives justification to works, whereas the latter bestows it freely without any help from works?" (III Ch 11 par 17).

These extracts from the Letter to the Romans also confirm that St. Paul speaks of the Law of the Old Testament in opposition to the law of love of the Gospel. St. Paul has never rejected the necessity of works for salvation, but the only worthy works are those which are connected with

the Law of Love of Jesus of Nazareth. The problem is that Calvin interprets the texts of St. Paul by limiting works to the application of the Old Testament law. One might therefore think that Calvin excludes the utility of works performed according to the law of love. Things are actually more complex. It is impossible to affirm that the love of neighbor should not be translated into acts and works, since Jesus of Nazareth gave his life to save us, the supreme act. Calvin's reasoning for eliminating the utility of acts of love is based on the same approach as predestination. Eminently rational approach and therefore which eliminates all forms of mystery and thus de facto limits the power of God, as I have already pointed out. Since everything is fixed in advance, in the total and absolute knowledge of everything by God, man has no merit in his charitable works, his works of love, for they are exclusively the work of God in his creative omnipotence from the beginning of the world to its end, so that nothing happens outside its will.

There is a reasonable part in this attitude, but it is not reasonable from this very fact, for God has no need of human reason. Not only are his thoughts not our thoughts, but rather the very nature of his thought is not of the same nature as human thought. It is clear that it is impossible to speak of it, for the mere fact of giving divine thought a different nature is already a human thought, and we can not get out of it, in spite of the lucubrations of our physicists.

Our human relationship with God can not do without words and reason. God communicates with us, in particular, with words that we can hear and appeal to our reason. But He has no need of human reason, no need any more of our words apart from his relations with men. It is well understood in the parable of the master of the vineyard. The fact that the latter receives as much as the first, who has worked all day under the Sun, is profoundly contrary to human reason. And we must admit entirely this divine position, beyond our rationalism. Nevertheless such an attitude is not irrational. The problem of rationalism lies entirely

in the starting point: in the hypotheses about the nature of ideas for philosophers and in the postulates for scientists. There is necessarily a starting point. And the starting point is inevitably arbitrary. If the starting point is not arbitrary, it would enter within the framework of the causality. It would raise the problem of the value of the asserted cause which would still refer back to another starting point.

Calvin vehemently opposed the rationalism that leads to atheism. It is well, moreover, what has happened since the middle of the eighteenth century with the Enlightenment and the Freemasons. But the rationalism is inevitable, even in theology. The whole question is where to begin. All Christians start from faith in God. But instead of admitting the mystery of Creation, Calvin attributes Creation, as in the Old Testament, to a divine thought, a thought developed in a human form by creating the world in an order which is at first rational. It must be understood, in passing, that if this order has since been replaced by another by our astronomers, this new order is certainly rational itself, but its foundations, its basic postulates are certainly the most utopian ever imagined. This starting point of Calvin's reasonable approach led him to predestination.

The other approach is to see a symbol in the Genesis and to leave to Creation its character of mystery, without limiting in any way the divine power. From this point of view there is certainly a causal development since Creation, but it does not in any way result in a predestination of man. This is the mystery of Freewill apparently in contradiction with causality. But this mystery is anterior to the Creation which contains it.

It remains to be seen now whether faith alone is sufficient for eternal salvation: "The reader now perceives with what fairness the Sophists of the present day cavil at our doctrine, when we say that a man is justified by faith alone (Rom. 4:2). They dare not deny that he is justified by faith, seeing Scripture so often declares it; but as the word alone is nowhere

expressly used they will not tolerate its being added. Is it so? What answer, then will they give to the words of Paul, when he contends that righteousness is not of faith unless it be gratuitous? How can it be gratuitous, and yet by works? By what cavils, moreover, will they evade his declaration in another place, that in the Gospel the righteousness of God is manifested? (Rom. 1:17). If righteousness is manifested in the Gospel, it is certainly not a partial or mutilated, but a full and perfect righteousness. The Law, therefore, has no part in its and their objection to the exclusive word alone is not only unfounded, but is obviously absurd. Does he not plainly enough attribute everything to faith alone when he disconnects it with works? What I would ask, is meant by the expressions, The righteousness of God without the law is manifested; "Being justified freely by his grace; Justified by faith without the deeds of the law? (Rom. 3:21, 24, 28). Here they have an ingenious subterfuge, one which, though not of their own devising but taken from Origin and some ancient writers, is most childish. They pretend that the works excluded are ceremonial, not moral works. Such profit do they make by their constant wrangling, that they possess not even the first elements of logic." (III Ch 11 par 19).

Calvin's approach is always the same. The law of love of neighbor is not a law in the sense that the letters of St. Paul give to this word by reference to the Old Testament. Now, Calvin explicitly recognizes that faith must be linked to charity: "We, indeed, acknowledge with Paul, that the only faith which justifies is that which works by love (Gal. 3:6); but love does not give it its justifying power. Nay, its only means of justifying consists in its bringing us into communication with the righteousness of Christ." (III Ch 11 par 20). So the works are necessary. Calvin later confirmed this: "And, therefore it is taught with perfect truth, that no man procures favor with God by means of works, but that, on the contrary, works are not pleasing to God unless the person has previously found favor in his sight.. Wherefore, purification of heart ought to precede, in order that the works performed by us may be

graciously accepted by God: for the saying of Jeremiah is always true, O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? (Jer. 5:3)." (III Ch 14 par 8).

We can certainly say that the works do not have a direct effect. God, in fact, has no need of our works, but these, as Calvin states, put us in communion with God. It is not nothing, for without the descent of God into our hearts there is evidently no salvation possible. All Calvin's art is dialectical, as he himself acknowledges. "Such profit do they make by their constant wrangling, that they possess not even the first elements of logic (wrong translation: in French: dialectic)." (III Ch 11 par 19).

The first rule of the Aristotelian dialectic consists in distinguishing categories. We must then look for the opposite categories and transcend them by merging them. Hegel made it a way of thinking, before Marx transformed the dialectic into an exclusive process of Nature. The dialectic of Marx is here opposed to that of Hegel, which remains on the level of the spirit. This utopia led Marx, not to the fusion of the opposing categories, but to the elimination of one of the categories, the one which would have subsisted ought to have had an absolute nature, yet devolved by Hegel to the fusion of opposites without elimination. It is also in this that the dialectic of Marx is opposed to that of Hegel. The Marxist dialectic, called revolutionary, proceeds by elimination. There remains only the memory of heaps of corpses accumulated all over on the Earth.

Calvin categorizes, but also eliminates exactly as Marx will. The category faith and category works are opposed. He eliminates works.

If works are useless why should we be aware of good and evil? "Hence this distinction between honorable and base actions God has not only engraven on the minds of each, but also often confirms in the administration of his providence. For we see how he visits those who cultivate virtue with many temporal blessings." (III Ch 14 par 2).

These blessings must of course be attributed to Providence, and curses to satan, but this is the result of an act of faith. This attitude can in no way be taken as a justification of faith.

Is Calvin's insistence on eliminating works a trace of doubt? So here's a new argument. We are sinners and our works, themselves are imbued with sins: "As a wine is corrupted when it is mingled with dregs" (in the French version only). "First, I say, that the best thing which can be produced by them is always tainted and corrupted by the impurity of the flesh, and has, as it were, some mixture of dross in it. Let the holy servant of God, I say, select from the whole course of his life the action which he deems most excellent, and let him ponder it in all its parts; he will doubtless find in it something that savors of the rottenness of the flesh, since our alacrity in well-doing is never what it ought to be, but our course is always retarded by much weakness."(III Ch 14 par 9). But there is another reason for Calvin. It is presented here first: "We must strongly insist on these two things: That no believer ever performed one work which, if tested by the strict judgment of God, could escape condemnation; and, moreover, that were this granted to be possible (though it is not), yet the act being vitiated and polluted by the sins of which it is certain that the author of it is guilty, it is deprived of its merit. This is the cardinal point of the present discussion. There is no controversy between us and the sounder Schoolmen as to the beginning of justification." (III Ch 14 par 11).

Calvin's two arguments are, as always, placed in the Old Testament view of a vengeful and vindictive God. Jesus of Nazareth came to overthrow this belief. God is love, Deus caritas est. Moreover, how could God judge all the acts of the faithful as damnable since he created man in his own image and man therefore can not be evil by nature. Besides, it is not so much human acts that are bad but thoughts. Calvin did not even qualify acts of impure! Moreover, the Christ was sent among men to

redeem their sins. How, then, could their acts be marked by sin? The acts marked by sin can only relate to those who refuse the redemption of sins. The actions performed in faith, and therefore in the mind the love of neighbor, can not therefore be bad and God certainly can not judge them bad. Moreover, the infinite mercy of God can not agree with Calvin's idea of general condemnation!

Faith alone has no meaning. "If she have not works, she is utterly dead" (James 2: 14-17, 26). Faith only makes sense in the love of neighbor. And the love of neighbor is realized only through acts of fraternal charity. Calvin agrees: "There is no controversy between us and the sounder Schoolmen as to the beginning of justification. They admit that the sinner, freely delivered from condemnation, obtains justification." (III Ch 14 par 11). Hence, how can we affirm that works are necessarily bad? And, therefore, how can they be said to be totally useless? Again, can we limit the divine power by refusing to think that God can give us the Freewill, despite the causality that encloses the World He created? But also by refusing to think that He loves us enough not only to judge us but also to appreciate our charitable acts: "it is to Me that you do it" (Mt 25: 31-46) declared Jesus of Nazareth. How can Calvin go against this statement that characterizes His teaching? If it is to the Christ that we do our charitable acts, can they be evil? Damnable? Unuseful?

Calvin's dialectic eliminates works. The innumerable evangelical passages that go against his convictions are ignored, just as the relativists ignore all the experiments that go against their dogmas. These are characteristic attitudes of progressives. They imagine themselves at the top of human knowledge, eclipsing any past thought. Of such a height, they obviously can not be deceived. What is opposed to their doctrines can not exist! Non lisset esse!

Beyond the cliff, the abyss! One more small step forward!

Calvin, after having long quoted St. Augustine, must finally acknowledge that "In this, however, there is nothing to prevent the Lord from embracing works as inferior causes." (III Ch 14 par 21). It is therefore that good works can count, yes, but only for "predestined to the inheritance of eternal life. I formerly quoted a passage from Bernard: As it is sufficient for merit not to presume on merit, so to be without merit is sufficient for condemnation, (Bernard in Cantic. Serm. 98). He immediately adds an explanation which softens the harshness of the expression, when he says, Hence be careful to have merits; when you have them, know that they were given; hope for fruit from the divine mercy, and you have escaped all the perils of poverty, ingratitude, and presumption.... There cannot be a doubt, that every thing in our works which deserves praise is owing to divine grace, and that there is not a particle of it which we can properly ascribe to ourselves". (III Ch 15 par 2-3).

Since God created us, we owe him everything obviously. But to reason from there to an absolutely and totally predetermined causal chain is a rationalist view. It is an intellectual journey exclusively based on human reason in its search for absolute causality. Creation is a mystery. Calvin's rationalist vision, even more than that of Luther, denies the mystery and seeks the development of Creation only from a rational, human point of view. It is pure anthropomorphism.

The rejection of this absurdity makes it possible to envisage things in another way and in particular to admit the gift of the Freewill and therefore of our responsibility in sins but also correlatively in good works. Why not be happy and even proud of good works, if we are so unhappy with our faults and failings? Is it not better to simply offer these good works in praise rather than to deny their responsibility by being proud of a thought so disinterested in appearance? The reasoning behind this disinterest has none of the characteristics of humility. It is by

intellectual reasoning that we can attribute everything to God. It would be better not to reason at all in this field.

Calvin's answer to his detractors, who accuse him of rejecting good works, is confined to the idea that we could boast of our good works to think worthy of heaven. But this is quite another matter. It is no longer a question of the utility of good works, but of the judgment which we might make in this respect. Now it is God who judges. Does He bear on our works the same judgment as we do? What do we know about the value of our works? It is the story of the Progressist who wants to go directly to heaven convinced he has done only good works!

Much more than the negation of the role of good works, the real question that arises is the value of our good works. Before giving God full responsibility for our good works, we must first make sure that they truly conform to the message of the Gospel. This is where we can only trust God with the hope of a favorable judgment. This vision completely reverses Calvin's rationalist argument. To attribute our good works to God is an impossibility, for we can not judge ourselves of the value of our actions. Of course "for the Lord cannot but love and delight in the good qualities which he produces in them by means of his Spirit."(III Ch 17 par 5), But it is God who judges. We can not in any way be assured of the value of our actions. "Assets" are conferred to us, but are we really sure that we have taken them as they are and that we have not altered them by our thoughts? Before affirming that the good works can not in any way assure us salvation, we should first explain what works we can claim to be good. And as we do not have the answer, Calvin's doctrinal statement has no bearing, no interest.

On the previous paragraph, we again find the nihilistic vision of man: "If it is clear then that man, when God first interposes for him, is naked and destitute of all good, and, on the other hand, loaded and filled with all kinds of evil,--for what quality, pray, shall we say that he is worthy of

the heavenly kingdom?" Now baptism precisely fills us with goodness and cleanses us from evil. But much more, how can we support this negation of man's image of God? How could the image be mediocre?

In passing, Calvin reminds us of his rationalist doctrine of predestination: "But when it is said that the Lord keeps a covenant of mercy with those who love him, the words rather demonstrate what kind of servants those are who have sincerely entered into the covenant, than express the reason why the Lord blesses them" (III Ch 17 par 5).

Yet Calvin seems to have foreseen the flaw of his reasoning: "Paul, knowing that justification by faith was the refuge of those who wanted righteousness of their own, confidently infers, that all who are justified by faith are excluded from the righteousness of works. But as it is clear that this justification is common to all believers, he with equal confidence infers that no man is justified by works". (III Ch 17 par 8). He continues moreover to the following page: "Forgiveness of sins being previously given, the good works which follow have a value different from their merit, because whatever is imperfect in them is covered by the perfection of Christ, and all their blemishes and pollutions are wiped away by his purity, so as never to come under the cognizance of the divine tribunal." (idem).

But while Calvin is expected to pose the problem of the value of works, in reality he merely generalizes the idea that works, whether good or bad, are of no use for salvation, since evil deeds are purified by the perfection of the Christ. So that even evil works would not enter into the damnation of the soul, any more than the good could contribute to salvation. One hoped for a flash of clairvoyance, one sinks even more into the doctrinal blindness.

Calvin, like the penitents, accumulated the blows against his doctrine, thinking afterwards better supporting it: " Should any one here obtrude

the numberless passages in which blessedness seems to be attributed to works, as, Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; "He that has mercy on the poor, happy is he; Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, and that endureth temptation; Blessed are they that keep judgment, that are pure in heart, meek, merciful, &c, they cannot make out that Paul's doctrine is not true. For seeing that the qualities thus extolled never all so exist in man as to obtain for him the approbation of God, it follows, that man is always miserable until he is exempted from misery by the pardon of his sins." (III Ch 17 par 10).

It is indeed the value of these virtues that is questioned. But instead of seeing in Divine judgment on this value the essential element of the role of works, Calvin remains in his doctrine. Salvation comes only from the remission of sins and works can ultimately play no role. And he insists again by repeating the famous passage of the Letter of St. James "But they say that we have a still more serious business with James, who in express terms opposes us. For he asks, Was not Abraham our father justified by works? and adds You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only, (James 2:21, 24)." (III Ch 17 par 11).

But St. James would not have written what he wanted to write by not giving to the words faith and works their real sense, those defined by Calvin of course: "The Apostle (St. James), in giving the name of faith to an empty opinion altogether differing from true faith, makes a concession which derogates in no respect from his case". (III Ch 17 par 11).

Everything would be a matter of interpretation. The salary promised for the works would in reality only be the inheritance of the Elects: "Let us now proceed to those passages which affirm that God will render to every one according to his deeds. Of this description are the following: We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done,

whether it be good or bad; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that does evil; They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation; Come, ye blessed of my Father; For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, &c." (III Ch 18 par 1).

In the same way, the word reward must also be understood as an inheritance: "There is nothing in the term reward to justify the inference that our works are the cause of salvation. First, let it be a fixed principle in our hearts, that the kingdom of heaven is not the hire of servants, but the inheritance of sons (Eph. 1:18); an inheritance obtained by those only whom the Lord has adopted as sons, and obtained for no other cause than this adoption...To these we may add the passages which describe eternal life as the reward of works, such as the following: The recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him; He that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded; Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; Every man shall receive his own rewards according to his own labour. The passages in which it is said that God will reward every man according to his works are easily disposed of. For that way of expression indicates not the cause but the order of sequence. Now, it is beyond a doubt that the steps by which the Lord in his mercy consummates our salvation are these, Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:30)." (III Ch 18 par 1-2).

Calvin comes back to the idea of value of works in the framework of the parable of the workers of the last hour of the vineyard. But instead of drawing the immediate consequence that the judgment on this value belongs only to God, and therefore that the problem of the utility of

works does not arise, quite the contrary, it always returns to his doctrine of the uselessness of works for salvation. "The interpretation of this parable is briefly and truly given by that ancient writer (whoever he was) who wrote the book *De Vocatione Gentium*, which goes under the name of Ambrose. I will give it in his words rather than my own: By means of this comparison, our Lord represented the many various ways of calling as pertaining to grace alone, where those who were introduced into the vineyard at the eleventh hour and made equal to those who had toiled the whole day, doubtless represent the case of those whom the indulgence of God, to commend the excellence of grace, has rewarded in the decline of the day and the conclusion of life; not paying the price of labor, but shedding the riches of his goodness on those whom he chose without works; in order that even those who bore the heat of the day, and yet received no more than those who came last, may understand that they received a gift of grace, not the hire of works, (Lib. 1, cap. 5)." (III Ch 18 par 3). This is obviously a semantic escalation. The two propositions are by no means mutually exclusive. There is no contradiction between the gift of grace and the acceptance of works. On the contrary, grace is necessary for works that we think good to be effectively judged for our salvation.

The position of Calvin finally clears up in the negation of any notion of judgment on works: "Why, but just on account of his faith? For though it saves no man without works (such faith being reprobate and not working by love), yet by means of it sins are forgiven; for the just lives by faith: without it works which seem good are converted into sins, (August. ad Bonifac., Lib. 3, c. 5). Here he not obscurely acknowledges what we so strongly maintains that the righteousness of good works depends on their being approved by God in the way of pardon." (III Ch 18 par 5) (the translation is very far from the French version !).

The negation of divine judgment can not be more clearly expressed. No angel is there, at the entrance to the paradise of Calvin, with his balance

for good and evil. There is no balance. The predestined go to heaven, the others to hell.

Yet St. Paul, so often used by Calvin to confirm his doctrine, never ceases to insist strongly on charity, and therefore on the works that flow from it: "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing, (1 Cor. 13:2). Again, Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity, (1 Cor. 13:13). Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness, (Col. 3:14). But let us suppose that charity is in every respect superior to faith, what man of sound judgment, nay, what man with any soundness in his brain, would argue that it therefore does more to justify? The power of justifying which belongs to faith consists not in its worth as a work. Our justification depends entirely on the mercy of God and the merits of Christ: when faith apprehends these, it is said to justify" (III Ch 18 par 8).

Apart from the negation of the divine judgment on the value of works, there is a petition of principle here, for Calvin uses his premise as proof. But this small logical error is corrected later on. We will be explained that it is a problem of meaning given to words.

"Now, if you ask our opponents in what sense they ascribe justification to charity, they will answer, Being a duty acceptable to God, righteousness is in respect of its merit imputed to us by the acceptance of the divine goodness. Here you see how beautifully the argument proceeds. We say that faith justifies not because it merits justification for us by its own worth, but because it is an instrument by which we freely obtain the righteousness of Christ. They overlooking the mercy of God, and passing by Christ, the sum of righteousness, maintain that we are justified by charity as being superior to faith" (III Ch 18 par 8).

This is obviously not the position of the Catholic Church. Mercy in no way bears upon salvation alone for the predestined who have faith, but on the value of works. With the spirit of charity, as St. Paul asks, we can hope that the divine mercy will judge them favorably. Faith is there certainly in the one who acts with charity, and therefore the problem of mercy does not arise in matters of faith but in the realization of faith in the value of works. And of course, mercy does not only concern the alleged predestined, but all men whom God loves at first indiscriminately.

The argument of Calvin is clarified with the reminder of the dialogue of the Christ with the young rich: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? he answers, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," (Mt. 19:16, 17).... Here he is questioned by a Doctor of the Law as to the means of obtaining eternal life; and the question is not put simply, but is, What can men do to attain it? Both the character of the speaker and his question induced our Lord to give this answer. Imbued with a persuasion of legal righteousness, the lawyer had a blind confidence in works. Then all he asked was, what are the works of righteousness by which salvation is obtained? Justly, therefore, is he referred to the law, in which there is a perfect mirror of righteousness." (III Ch 18 par 9). This is also what Calvin preaches, but a first problem arises from the continuation of the dialogue: "Jesus said to him, If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you possess, give it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, and follow me."

The works can therefore provide more than just the fulfilment of the law. The second problem is the certainty that we can really respect the law. This is a problem that Calvin then addresses: "Then only do they feel that the asylum of safety is in Christ when they see how much their conduct is at variance with the divine righteousness, which consists in the observance of the law. The sum of the whole is this, If salvation is sought in works, we must keep the commandments, by which we are

instructed in perfect righteousness. But we cannot remain here unless we would stop short in the middle of our course; for none of us is able to keep the commandments. Being thus excluded from the righteousness of the law, we must retake ourselves to another remedy--viz. to the faith of Christ." (III Ch 18 par 9). Again, there is a semantic escalation as the debate is deferred to our inability to comply with the law. In his answer, the Christ does not question the young man's ability to respect the law. It is a pure invention of Calvin that joins his position on the unworthiness of human nature, yet in the image of God and freed from the Original Sin by baptism!

Without leaving aside works, Calvin comes to the question of freedom. According to the good old rational method, he begins by defining consciousness. The conscience of the Christian, as of the philosopher, refers to the sovereign good and therefore to an absolute objective inaccessible, always attracting us to more perfection. This is not true for Calvin. Consciousness is only a feeling which is limited to the knowledge of faults. If one passes on the incomprehensible reference to the prohibitions of the Old Testament, as not to consume certain meats, Calvin nevertheless leaves consciousness its freedom despite the duty to conform to these prohibitions so as not to shock others. But the problem is not really there. What good can this freedom do if man is predestined? Calvin returns here to his doctrine of the knowledge of evil. "Hence the ancient proverb, Conscience is a thousand witnesses. For the same reason Peter also employs the expression, the answer of a good conscience, (1 Pet. 3:21), for tranquillity of mind; when persuaded of the grace of Christ, we boldly present ourselves before God. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, that we have no more conscience of sins, (Heb. 10:2), that we are held as freed or acquitted, so that sin no longer accuses us." (III Ch 19 par 15).

Man, in conscience, would be able to judge whether his acts conformed to the divine will in order to give himself a good conscience. It is a total

reversal of the Evangelical texts. It is God who judges. We can not decide for ourselves whether our actions are good or evil. Calvin thought that our actions can never be good. God would always judge them bad because we are full of sins. But for the faults? How can we pretend to know them enough to be sure of being forgiven entirely? Is the purpose of confession only to give oneself a good conscience? Have we really measured all aspects of our actions? If it were, what would the divine mercy serve beyond confession? It is good that our actions are never perfect enough and that the conscience of our sin is limitless. And the divine mercy far exceeds our consciousness!

We can say that the problem of the freedom is roughly treated! We are soon entailed towards subjects better appropriated to criticize the papists and prayers.

Since Calvin rejects the Freewill, prayer can not be an act of will but only a divine grace: "Let us know, then, that none duly prepare themselves for prayer but those who are so impressed with the majesty of God that they engage in it free from all earthly cares and affections." (III Ch 20 par 5). Moreover, in the context of predestination, God bends only on the righteous: "his eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry, (Ps. 34:16)" (III Ch 20 par 10). This is confirmed just after: "Gradually deducing the origin of prayer from faith, he distinctly maintains that God cannot be invoked sincerely except by those to whom, by the preaching of the Gospel, his mercy and willingness have been made known, nay, familiarly explained" (III Ch 20 par 11).

But the papists have understood nothing! "Therefore, when we say that believers ought to feel firmly assured, they think we are saying the absurdest thing in the world. But if they had any experiment in true prayer, they would assuredly understand that God cannot be duly invoked without this firm sense of the Divine benevolence. But as no man can well perceive the power of faith, without at the same time

feeling it in his heart, what profit is there in disputing with men of this character, who plainly show that they have never had more than a vain imagination? Therefore, leaving those who are thus blinded, let us fix our thoughts on the words of Paul, that God can only be invoked by such as have obtained a knowledge of his mercy from the Gospel, and feel firmly assured that that mercy is ready to be bestowed upon them." (III Ch 20 par 11).

I believed that the first object of prayer was to glorify God, then to express our requests, and finally to implore His mercy for our sins. Not at all. If it is very evident, as Calvin makes it curiously, that prayer is by no means destined to glorify ourselves, on the other hand, he sees in it only an occasion to complain of our sinful state: "Genuine prayer is not that by which we arrogantly extol ourselves before God, or set a great value on any thing of our own, but that by which, while confessing our guilt." (III Ch 20 par 12).

But the great shame of the Papacy would be to think that we could pray to the saints so that they intercede for us with God: "But who can deny that this was the practice for several ages, and is still the practice, wherever Popery prevails? To procure the favour of God, human merits are ever and anon obtruded, and very frequently while Christ is passed by, God is supplicated in their name. I ask if this is not to transfer to them that office of sole intercession which we have above claimed for Christ?" (III Ch 20 par 21).

Christ would be the only intercessor with God: "He, says Ambrose, is our mouth by which we speak to the Father; our eye by which we see the Father; our right hand by which we offer ourselves to the Father. Save by his intercession neither we nor any saints have any intercourse with God, (Ambros. Lib. de Isaac et Anima). If they object that the public prayers which are offered up in churches conclude with the words, through Jesus Christ our Lord, it is a frivolous evasion; because no less

insult is offered to the intercession of Christ by confounding it with the prayers and merits of the dead, than by omitting it altogether, and making mention only of the dead. Then, in all their litanies, hymns, and proses where every kind of honour is paid to dead saints, there is no mention of Christ." (III Ch 20 par 21).

Now, I believed that nothing separated Jesus Christ from his Father? Could Calvin deny the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth? Why does it make a difference between praying to God and praying to Jesus Christ?

We can not deny some abuses in solicitations to the saints. Calvin has a tremendous time there, especially as it is an opportunity to tackle the profits the Church derives from the gifts that accompany these prayers to St. Anthony in particular. "After men began to look to the intercession of saints, a peculiar administration was gradually assigned to each, so that, according to diversity of business, now one, now another, intercessor was invoked... so far are their pastors from curing or curbing this frantic course, that, allured by the scent of gain, they approve and applaud it." (III Ch 20 par 22).

Calvin rejects all prayers to the saints and especially to the Virgin Mary: "But while seeking to relieve themselves of the odium of this vile and criminal procedure, with what pretext can they defend the practice of calling upon Eloy (Eligius) or Medard to look upon their servants, and send them help from heaven, or the Holy Virgin to order her Son to do what they ask? The Council of Carthage forbade direct prayer to be made at the altar to saints. It is probable that these holy men, unable entirely to suppress the force of depraved custom, had recourse to this check, that public prayers might not be vitiated with such forms of expression as *Sancte Petre, ora pro nobis* --St Peter, pray for us. But how much farther has this devilish extravagance proceeded when men hesitate not to transfer to the dead the peculiar attributes of Christ and God?" (III Ch 20 par 22).

It must be said that we have witnessed for a very long time a proliferation of celebrations of the Virgin Mary. Today, there are no less than 64 days of the year devoted to it in the world, not counting the entire month of May. All masses and celebrations end with an invocation to Mary. Curiously, the beautiful song of the Alma redemptoris mater ends with peccatorum misere which is not far from a direct request for forgiveness. Moreover, in the great progressive movement, attempts have been made to reproduce the same celebrations for St. Joseph in the name of the collective salvation of the workers. By relying on St. Paul, Calvin had no difficulty in denouncing an already latent drift. St. Paul does not say a word about the Virgin Mary. Calvin did not, however, raise the abandonment of the Holy Spirit. The four great hymns to the Virgin Mary are regularly sung, especially the Salve regina. It is just as if the Holy Spirit is celebrated in the Pentecost. I very recently heard singing that day the Veni sancte spiritus which I thought was completely forgotten. Another time, in Lausanne, I heard some strophes of the Veni creator. And yet, "God hath also given you his Holy Spirit" (St. Paul 1 Thessalonian 4: 8) and "If then, wicked as you are, you know how to give good things to your children, how much more so the Father He will give the Holy Ghost to those who ask it." (Luke 11-13), and finally, "God is the Spirit, and those who worship him must adore Him in spirit and in truth." (St. John 4-24).

For Calvin, it is properly adoring again a multitude of gods: "And thus not only were gods set up according to the number of the cities (the charge which the prophet brought against Israel of old, Jer. 2:28; 11:13), but according to the number of individuals." (III Ch 20 par 22).

But the worst thing is that the Papists would have declared saints people who do not like Calvin at all and omitted the true ones, like Abraham and David: "And since those good Doctors would make out by these words that the Patriarchs are intercessors, I should like them to tell me

why, in so great a multitude, no place whatever is given to Abraham, the father of the Church? We know well from what a crew they select their intercessors. Let them then tell me what consistency there is in neglecting and rejecting Abraham, whom God preferred to all others, and raised to the highest degree of honour. The only reason is, that as it was plain there was no such practice in the ancient Church, they thought proper to conceal the novelty of the practice by saying nothing of the Patriarchs: as if by a mere diversity of names they could excuse a practice at once novel and impure." (III Ch 20 par 25).

St. Augustine being a reference of Calvin, he could not go against his approval of the prayers sung: to sing is to pray twice. Yet he can not hide his preference for reading: "St. Augustine confesses (Confess. Lib. 10 cap. 33) that the fear of this danger sometimes made him wish for the introduction of a practice observed by Athanasius, who ordered the reader to use only a gentle inflection of the voice, more akin to recitation than singing. But on again considering how many advantages were derived from singing, he inclined to the other side. If this moderation is used, there cannot be a doubt that the practice is most sacred and salutary." (III Ch 20 par 32).

But of course, in no way like the papists "On the other hand, songs composed merely to tickle and delight the ear are unbecoming the majesty of the Church, and cannot but be most displeasing to God. (III Ch 20 par 32). (short summary of the French text).

Here we find the negation of the glorification of God by the most beautiful churches. It is the disastrous interpretation of the progressives of the Temple scene where a poor woman gives all that remains for the completion of the Temple. A shame for Calvin and the Progressives: it is necessary to give to the poor and not to luxury and greatness for the glory of God!

It must be recognized, however, that after Vatican II there was a proliferation of songs, with sometimes ambiguous words, which do not really go in the direction of beauty and grandeur.

After the songs, Calvin attacks Latin. Among the Orthodox, the mass, and especially the consecration, is first and foremost the business of the pope. For centuries, it was the same in the Catholic Church. Even churches have been erected to separate the choir from the part reserved for the faithful who did not really participate in the Eucharist. That is why it was unimportant that the canon of the Mass should be in Latin. The Second Vatican Council changed this view. He has apparently given reason to Calvin: "It is also plain that the public prayers are not to be couched in Greek among the Latins, nor in Latin among the French or English (as hitherto has been every where practised), but in the vulgar tongue, so that all present may understand them, since they ought to be used for the edification of the whole Church, which cannot be in the least degree benefited by a sound not understood. Those who are not moved by any reason of humanity or charity, ought at least to be somewhat moved by the authority of Paul, whose words are by no means ambiguous: When thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks, but the other is not edified, (1 Cor. 14:16, 17). How then can one sufficiently admire the unbridled license of the Papists, who, while the Apostle publicly protests against it, hesitate not to bawl out the most verbose prayers in a foreign tongue, prayers of which they themselves sometimes do not understand one syllable, and which they have no wish that others should understand?" (III Ch 20 par 32).

In reality, the faithful have always prayed in vernacular language. They were not associated with the canon of the Mass. That is what has actually changed. Protestants rejecting the real presence in the Eucharist, it has no sacred character for them. The idea that has finally taken hold

in the Church is that the participation of the faithful is not necessarily in opposition to the sacredness of the Eucharist. It was therefore necessary to adopt the vernacular languages.

After a long passage on the Our Father, Calvin returns to predestination: "But if it is plainly owing to the mere pleasure of God that salvation is spontaneously offered to some, while others have no access to it." (III Ch 21 par 1). "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death." (III Ch 21 par 5).

It is still the most radical negation of the Freewill! But it is above all a rational vision. This is the worldview of the Positivists. A scientific and therefore causal vision of the Universe, even if it is a totalitarian synthesis outside time, or rather by integrating the totality of moments in a single moment of an absolutely general knowledge. Calvin, like all progressives, attributes to God logical thoughts peculiar to the human mind. Now God is Love. It is the antipode of rationalist vision.

It is then learned that, as in the Quran of Mohammed, divine mercy concerns only the Elect: "We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the Elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment." (III Ch 21 par 5).

It is not only a purely heretical vision, but also an absurdity on the sole philosophical level. God is unique absolute in all and can not have a relative, partial mercy.

The doctrine of predestination leads Calvin into a form of the Adoptianist heresy. Without waiting, of course, his baptism, Jesus of Nazareth would have become Son of God at his conception. The heresy is very similar. Now Jesus of Nazareth is God, born of God. Calvin gives the Holy Trinity a historical existence, I mean set in a moment of history, but God is evidently out of history, out of the ephemeral. "(Jésus-Christ) is conceived a mortal man of the seed of David; what, I would ask them, are the virtues by which he deserved to become in the very womb, the head of angels the only begotten Son of God, the image and glory of the Father, the light, righteousness, and salvation of the world? It is wisely observed by Augustine, that in the very head of the Church we have a bright mirror of free election, lest it should give any trouble to us the members--viz. that he did not become the Son of God by living righteously, but was freely presented with this great honor, that he might afterwards make others partakers of his gifts." (III Ch 22 par 1).

Further on, Calvin himself proves how false his doctrine is by a quote from St. Peter: "In this sense he says in the same chapters that Christ as a lamb was foreordained before the creation of the world, (1 Pet. 1:19, 20)." (III Ch 22 par 6).

In all this passage, Calvin relies on examples taken from the Old Testament, the case of Esau and Jacob in particular. Now, these are facts reported by prophets who are more a matter of symbol than of historical reality. Moreover, the New Testament came to fulfill the Old by giving a new meaning to the text. It is the law of Love that changes everything. "But Ambrose, Origin, and Jerome, were of opinion, that God dispenses his grace among men according to the use which he foresees that each will make of it. It may be added, that Augustine also was for some time

of this opinion; but after he had made greater progress in the knowledge of Scripture, he not only retracted it as evidently false, but powerfully confuted it (August. *Retract. Lib. 1, c. 13*). Nay, even after the retraction, glancing at the Pelagians who still persisted in that error, he says, Who does not wonder that the Apostle failed to make this most acute observation? For after stating a most startling proposition concerning those who were not yet born, and afterwards putting the question to himself by way of objection, What then? Is there unrighteousness with God? he had an opportunity of answering, that God foresaw the merits of both, he does not say so, but has recourse to the justice and mercy of God, (August. *Epist. 106, ad Sixtum*).” (III Ch 22 par 8).

Calvin did not succeed in moving away from the Old Testament idea of a vindictive God. It is the negation of the message of Jesus of Nazareth. With his usual aggressiveness, Calvin returns the dish!: “But because many are the species of blasphemy which these virulent dogs utter against God, we shall, as far as the case admits, give an answer to each. Foolish men raise many grounds of quarrel with God, as if they held him subject to their accusations. First, they ask why God is offended with his creatures who have not provoked him by any previous offense; for to devote to destruction whomsoever he pleases, more resembles the caprice of a tyrant than the legal sentence of a judge; and, therefore, there is reason to expostulate with God, if at his mere pleasure men are, without any desert of their own, predestinated to eternal death. If at any time thoughts of this kind come into the minds of the pious, they will be sufficiently armed to repress them, by considering how sinful it is to insist on knowing the causes of the divine will, since it is itself, and justly ought to be, the cause of all that exists. For if his will has any cause, there must be something antecedent to it, and to which it is annexed; this it were impious to imagine. The will of God is the supreme rule of righteousness, so that everything which he wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of his willing it.” (III Ch 23 par 2).

The vengeful and hateful God, but it is true "by equity", is manifested on every page of Calvin: "Accordingly, when we are accosted in such terms as these, Why did God from the first predestine some to death, when, as they were not yet in existence, they could not have merited sentence of death? let us by way of reply ask in our turn, What do you imagine that God owes to man, if he is pleased to estimate him by his own nature? As we are all vitiated by sin, we cannot but be hateful to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty, but the strictest justice." (III Ch 23 par 3).

This position is senseless: if we are in the image of God, our reason, which essentially affects the spiritual, can not be worthless. Our mind can not accept the absurd. God is infinitely good necessarily and philosophically, and therefore He can not want the eternal death of anyone. If this human logic has no meaning in relation to God, then we do not share anything with God because that is the essence of our being. Conversely, moreover, Calvin's reasoning has no justification since everything is possible to God, he may as well want the opposite of Calvin's thesis. Calvin holds a very logical reasoning, really God can do without human thoughts, but he can do without those of Calvin and therefore do not proceed to the predestination of men. If one thinks that human logic is not of a divine order, which is moreover certain, one can not hold either a logical position or the contrary position, even if it were also logical in itself. It is obvious that two logical arguments may lead to opposite conclusions if the basic assumptions differ somewhat. It is thus that Calvin does not postulate an infinitely good God, which he confirms by his vengeance, of which the Old Testament gives so many demonstrations. On this basis Calvin is right, of course. But is this the right hypothesis? Certainly not in the words of St. Paul, on which Calvin rests. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit man has access to God who dwells within him and necessarily first in the heart of course but also in the mind. Everything depends on the acceptance of the Logos as the source of everything and therefore incidentally of our thought which can

not be contrary to the divine vision if it is enlightened and although the thoughts of God are not the thoughts of men.

And finally, it is Calvin himself who judges and condemns his opponents: "If all are taken from a corrupt mass, it is not strange that all are subject to condemnation. Let them not, therefore, charge God with injustice, if by his eternal judgment they are doomed to a death to which they themselves feel that whether they will or not they are drawn spontaneously by their own nature. Hence it appears how perverse is this affectation of murmuring, when of set purpose they suppress the cause of condemnation which they are compelled to recognize in themselves, that they may lay the blame upon God. But though I should confess a hundred times that God is the author (and it is most certain that he is), they do not, however, thereby efface their own guilt, which, engraven on their own consciences, is ever and anon presenting itself to their view" (III Ch 23 par 3).

For Calvin, Humanity is a field of ryegrass: all rot! Thus there is nothing abnormal in God's decision to turn a few ryegrass into wheat and burn the rest. Yet, in the parable, there is first only corn. All men are therefore called to be saved. But Satan comes to spread the bad seed and not God as Calvin presumes. Predestination is sowing a mixture of wheat and t ryegrass, what master would do that? "They again object, Were not men predestinated by the ordination of God to that corruption which is now held forth as the cause of condemnation? If so, when they perish in their corruptions they do nothing else than suffer punishment for that calamity, into which, by the predestination of God, Adam fell, and dragged all his posterity headlong with him. Is not he, therefore, unjust in thus cruelly mocking his creatures? I admit that by the will of God all the sons of Adam fell into that state of wretchedness in which they are now involved; and this is just what I said at the first, that we must always return to the mere pleasure of the divine will, the cause of which is hidden in himself. But it does not forthwith follow that God lies open

to this charge. For we will answer with Paul in these words, Nay but, O man, who art thou that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? (Rom. 9:20, 21)?" (III Ch 23 par 4). The comparison to the potter's jar is a petition of principle since Calvin bases his statements on the negation of the transcendental nature of man. The relationship of man to God is by no means of the same nature as the relationship of the jar to the potter, because man was created in the image of God, while the jar, even with a human form, has no thought. We can not say that the thought of the jar is not the potter's thought, for the pot has no thought at all, whereas God has given man the thought, certainly of a different order from The divine thought, but thought that opens the access to God.

The problem of predestination is connected with the existence of the evil: "This question, like others, is skillfully explained by Augustine: "Let us confess with the greatest benefit, what we believe with the greatest truth, that the God and Lord of all things who made all things very good, both foreknow that evil was to arise out of good, and knew that it belonged to his most omnipotent goodness to bring good out of evil" (III Ch 23 par 7). Calvin's rather elementary rationalism collides here with a paradox. Calvin never explained how evil could come out of good. The reverse is explained by divine mercy, but how can evil come out of good? Could this result from the divine will? Calvin does not dare say it. It is also an absurdity on the sole philosophical level.

This question is undoubtedly the most delicate consequence of predestination. To get out of this impasse, Calvin must make a distinction between the will of God, "the ordinance of God", and the divine permission: "Nor, indeed, is there any probability in the thing itself--viz. that man brought death upon himself merely by the permission, and not by the ordination of God; as if God had not

determined what he wished the condition of the chief of his creatures to be. I will not hesitate, therefore, simply to confess with Augustine that the will of God is necessity, and that every thing is necessary which he has willed; just as those things will certainly happen which he has foreseen (August. de Gen. ad Lit., Lib. 6, cap. 15)..... . Man therefore falls, divine providence so ordaining, but he falls by his own fault. The Lord had a little before declared that all the things which he had made were very good (Gen. 1:31). Whence then the depravity of man, which made him revolt from God? Lest it should be supposed that it was from his creation, God had expressly approved what proceeded from himself Therefore man's own wickedness corrupted the pure nature which he had received from God, and his ruin brought with it the destruction of all his posterity." (III Ch 23 par 8).

If then man can go against the plan of God, it is without doubt that he has the Freewill! Of course, this Freewill is not acquired by man, it is a gift from God. And finally, it is a little what Calvin writes, but he remains imprisoned in his rational approach. Everything should come from God, but evil can not come from God. Calvin gets away with a semantic somersault: God allows evil, but did not want it. It remains to say where the evil comes from? One aspect of the question is that, contrary to what is written in the Old Testament, evil is not in things, in Nature. However, Calvin remains somewhat linked to this vision. Jesus of Nazareth has put the evil in its place: in the mind of man. We are fully outside of the rationalist perspective of Calvin. This is the mystery of man! The existence of evil has nothing to do with the experimental world of rationalists. It is a matter of mind!

But above all, you should not speak about it to the faithful. And unfortunately, St. Augustine had this idea, contrary to righteousness, of hiding the truth: "And yet as that holy man had a singular desire to edify, he so regulates his method of teaching as carefully, and as far as in

him lay, to avoid giving offense. For he reminds us, that those things which are truly should also be fitly spoken. Were any one to address the people thus: If you do not believe, the reason is, because God has already doomed you to destruction: he would not only encourage sloth, but also give countenance to wickedness. Were any one to give utterance to the sentiment in the future tense, and say, that those who hear will not believe because they are reprobates, it were imprecation rather than doctrine. Wherefore, Augustine not undeservedly orders such, as senseless teachers or minister and ill-omened prophets, to retire from the Church. He, indeed, elsewhere truly contends that a man profits by correction only when He who causes those whom He pleases to profit without correction, pities and assists." (III Ch 23 par 14).

The risk of an attitude, close to bad faith, is to disturb the right minds. Will they not be led, by lack of information, to attribute to themselves merits which belong to the grace and mercy of God? To believe they are saved. Now, Calvin writes precisely that one can be conscious of belonging to the Elects: "Therefore, this inward calling is an infallible pledge of salvation. Hence the words of John, Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he has given us, (1 John 3:24). And lest the flesh should glory, in at least responding to him, when he calls and spontaneously offers himself, he affirms that there would be no ears to hear, no eyes to see, did not he give them." (III Ch 24 par 2).

Of course, this consciousness can not stop there. The saved ones must conform to the Gospel: "Meanwhile, I deny not that, in order to be assured of our salvation, we must begin with the word, and that our confidence ought to go no farther than the word when we invoke God the Father." (III Ch 25 par 6). This is confirmed later: "Then, if we doubt whether we are received into the protection of Christ, he obviates the doubt when he spontaneously offers himself as our Shepherd, and declares that we are of the number of his sheep if we hear his voice (John 10:3, 16). Let us, therefore, embrace Christ, who is kindly offered to us,

and comes forth to meet us: he will number us among his flock, and keep us within his fold." (III Ch 25 par 3). There is therefore an act of the Christian who believes to know he is saved: he has to follow the Gospel. But the damned is not free from his acts. He can only deviate from the Gospel: "Those, therefore, whom he has created for dishonor during life and destruction at death, that they may be vessels of wrath and examples of severity, in bringing to their doom, he at one time deprives of the means of hearing his word, at another by the preaching of it blinds and stupefies them the more." (III Ch 24 par 12.).

If, according to Calvin, the damned has no freedom, there must be an act of faith for the saved! Thus the saved has the Freewill. It is the whole of Calvin's doctrine which stumbles here over a fundamental contradiction. The saved does not act according to the Gospel by predestination, but by will, whereas the damned has to depart from it by predestination. That is to say that God would have wanted the evil for the damned and that he would have left the good with the initiative of the saved!

Calvin wants to explain the divine thoughts in fact, or at least he seeks a rational explanation for the Freewill problem and predestination. He tries to convince us by reason. Of course, he leaves to God the mystery of his decisions. But these decisions would fall within the rational frame of a logical organization. This is the rationalist heresy. Not only are divine thoughts not accessible to us, they are exercised in a frame that is a matter of mystery and certainly not a matter of human logic. This is evident in the parable of the last worker who spent only one hour in the vineyard.

Just before, Calvin had violently opposed St. Gregory: "Gregory, therefore, is most grievously and perniciously in error; when he says that we are conscious only of our calling, but are uncertain of our election; and hence he exhorts all to fear and trembling, giving this as the reason, that though we know what we are to-day, yet we know not what

we are to be (Gregor. Hom. 38). But in that passage he clearly shows how he stumbled on that stone. By suspending election on the merit of works, he had too good a reason for dispiriting the minds of his readers, while, at the same time, as he did not lead them away from themselves to confidence in the divine goodness, he was unable to confirm them" (III Ch 24 par 9).

I am not attributing to Calvin a thought that he would not have: he wrote it: "Why, then, while bestowing grace on the one, does he pass by the other? In regard to the former.... Why, then, does he not do it? Because he is unwilling. Why he is unwilling remains with himself, (August. de Genes. ad Lit. Lib. 2). We should not attempt to be wise above what is meet" (III Ch 24 par 13).

It is already infinitely too much. We know nothing of the divine thoughts!

In the mind of Calvin, St. Chrysostome is wrong too. He has unfortunately not been able to read the works of Calvin: "and it is much better to take Augustine's explanation, than to quibble with Chrysostom, that he draws him who is willing, and stretching forth his hand, (Chrysost. Hom. de Convers. Pauli), lest the difference should seem to lie in the judgment of God, and not in the mere will of man." (III Ch 24 par 13).

Now, now the damned are condemned only by their fault: "since God is the Father of all, it is unjust to discard any one before he has by his misconduct merited such a punishment.... But those who thus charge God are so blinded by their love of evil speaking, that they consider not that as God maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, (Mt. 5:45), so the inheritance is treasured up for a few to whom it shall one day be said, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, &c. (Mt. 25:34)." (III Ch 24 par 16).

Calvin reverses the situation. The damned are responsible for their acts and suffer the consequences, whereas the chosen ones go to heaven by an eternal decision. This elementary contradiction results from a problem insoluble by the human logic. Any reasoning about God's thought, about God's intentions, about God's will is doomed to failure. Calvin thought he could escape the paradoxes by limiting his reasoning as we have just seen: "We should not attempt to be wise above what is meet" (III Ch 24 par 13). But it is already an absurd claim.

It is now necessary to show that the papacy unduly arrogated a kind of property over the Church. Calvin pushes us into a long and purely semantic approach which is reminiscent of the debates about the nature of the Holy Spirit, the filioque. Must we believe "in the Church" or "the Church" without "in"? The Church is the totality of the faithfuls: "we acknowledge all as members of the Church who by confession of faith, regularity of conduct, and participation in the sacraments, unite with us in acknowledging the same God and Christ. The knowledge of his body, inasmuch as he knew it to be more necessary for our salvation, he has made known to us by surer marks. Hence the form of the Church appears and stands forth conspicuous to our view." (IV Ch 1 par 8-9).

It would not be a matter of believing in the Roman Catholic Church. Calvin is again confronted with the narrowness of his vision, for the Orthodox also affirm to believe "in the Church" and this Church is the Orthodox Church, knowing evidently that this Church also includes the faithfuls, just as the Church Catholic.

Finally, the papacy is not Calvin's favorite target. The worst is for the Protestants who do not follow his line. "Such of old were the Cathari and the Donatists, who were similarly infatuated. Such in the present day are some of the Anabaptists, who would be thought to have made superior progress. Others, again, sin in this respect, not so much from that insane pride as from inconsiderate zeal. Seeing that among those to

whom the Gospel is preached, the fruit produced is not in accordance with the doctrine, they forthwith conclude that there no church exists. The offence is indeed well founded, and it is one to which in this most unhappy age we give far too much occasion. It is impossible to excuse our accursed sluggishness, which the Lord will not leave unpunished, as he is already beginning sharply to chastise us." (IV Ch 1 par 13).

And so, Calvin will send Michel Servetus to the pry. And in the name of the Church, in the sense in which he understands it: "And justly; for the right of admitting or excluding ought not to be left to the decision of individuals. Cognisance of this point, which cannot be exercised without due order, as shall afterwards be more fully shown, belongs to the whole church. It would therefore be unjust to hold any private individual as polluted by the unworthiness of another, whom he neither can nor ought to keep back from communion." (IV Ch 1 par 15).

After this long anathema, let us come back to serious matters. Since it is difficult to affirm that the Roman Catholic Church does not include all the faithfuls too, another argument must be find. Calvin holds the truth. Now, in persisting out of this truth, the Catholic Church can not be the true Church: "Again, if the true Church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), it is certain that there is no Church where lying and falsehood have usurped the ascendancy. Since this is the state of matters under the Papacy, we can understand how much of the Church there survives. There, instead of the ministry of the word, prevails a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light. In place of the Lord's Supper, the foulest sacrilege has entered, the worship of God is deformed by a varied mass of intolerable superstitions; doctrine (without which Christianity exists not) is wholly buried and exploded, the public assemblies are schools of idolatry and impiety. Wherefore, in declining fatal participation in such wickedness, we run no risk of being dissevered from the Church of Christ. The communion of the Church

was not instituted to be a chain to bind us in idolatry, impiety, ignorance of God, and other kinds of evil, but rather to retain us in the fear of God and obedience of the truth." (IV Ch 2 par 1-2).

Calvin considered it very unfortunate that St. Augustine had taken a stand in favor of the Papacy and not of the Church of Constantinople. The uninterrupted succession existed in both Churches. So that's not the determining factor. In the absence of any other reason, and according to his custom, Calvin proceeded to a petition of principle. It is his own judgment on the Roman Church that justifies it not being considered the true Church of Christ: "But what if I bring Greece before them? Therefore, I again ask them, Why they say that the Church perished among the Greeks, among whom there never was any interruption in the succession of bishops--a succession, in their opinion, the only guardian and preserver of the Church? They make the Greeks schismatics. Why? because, by revolting from the Apostolic See, they lost their privilege. What? Do not those who revolt from Christ much more deserve to lose it? It follows, therefore, that the pretence of succession is vain, if posterity do not retain the truth of Christ, which was handed down to them by their fathers, safe and uncorrupted, and continue in it." (IV Ch 2 par 2). But this is not the opinion of Calvin: "they stick in their own mire, because they substitute a vile prostitute for the sacred spouse of Christ." (IV Ch 2 par 3).

The next argument is less controversial. It relates to the interpretation of the texts: "Cyprian, also, following Paul, derives the fountain of ecclesiastical concord from the one bishopric of Christ." (IV Ch 2 par 6). As we shall see, Calvin wishes to remain at the bishopric of Christ and the apostles, of whom it has not been formally stated that they should have successors, although Peter was formally designated as the head of the Church by Christ And therefore in its place on Earth: "But Christ being immortal, had not the least occasion to have a vicar substituted for him." (IV Ch 18 par 2).

An additional little petition of principle does not spoil anything. As Calvin holds the truth, he was put out of the Roman Church as the apostles were put out of the synagogues: "Christ, I say, forewarned his apostles, they shall put you out of the synagogues (John 16:2). The synagogues of which he speaks were then held to be lawful churches. Seeing then it is certain that we were cast out, and we are prepared to show that this was done for the name of Christ, the cause should first be ascertained before any decision is given either for or against us. This, however, if they choose, I am willing to leave to them; to me it is enough that we behaved to withdraw from them in order to draw near to Christ." (IV Ch 2 par 6).

Bishops and priests must be elected: "Indeed, we see that by the command of the Lord, the practice in electing the Levitical priests was to bring them forward in view of the people before consecration. Nor is Matthias enrolled among the number of the apostles, nor are the seven deacons elected in any other way, than at the sight and approval of the people (Acts 6:2). Those examples, says Cyprian, show that the ordination of a priest behaved not to take place, unless under the consciousness of the people assisting" (IV Ch 3 par 15). This is obviously not the case with the papists! Elected by the people, but not by the common, the common people! "It was, indeed, decreed (and I admit on the best grounds) by the Council of Laodicea (Can. 18) that the election should not be left to crowds. For it scarcely ever happens that so many heads, with one consent, settle any affair well. It generally holds true, *Incertum scindi studia in contraria vulgus*;--Opposing wishes rend the fickle crowd..... . Leo sets down this order, when he says, The wishes of the citizens, the testimonies of the people, the choice of the honourable, the election of the clergy, are to be waited for (Leo, Ep. 87)." (IV Ch 4 par 12). And to avoid unpleasant surprises: "For, first, the clergy alone selected, and presented him whom they had selected to the magistrate, or senate, and chief men. These, after deliberation, put their signature to

the election, if it seemed proper, if not, they chose another whom they more highly approved. The matter was then laid before the multitude, who, although not bound by those previous proceedings, were less able to act tumultuously" (IV Ch 4 par 12).

It must be admitted that the intrusion of political power into the life of the Church was a disaster: "In the courts of princes in the present day, you may see youths who are thrice abbots, twice bishops, once archbishops." (IV Ch 5 par 7). When one thinks of Talleyrand and the luxury and comfort the Rohans, the hereditary archbishops of Strasburg, liked to surround themselves, , one can imagine that Calvin would have had little difficulty in convincing. The atheism that reigned at the end of the eighteenth century was not without cause. But is the Church really responsible for these notorious abuses? In any case, the system which Calvin seems to have preferred would not have prevented abuses.

We must point out an error by Calvin: "The monks...[was] were unknown to the early Church;" (IV Ch 5 par 8). Actually the monks date back to the very beginning of the Church, in Egypt, from the beginning of the third century:

After these preliminaries, "The question, then, may be thus stated, Is it necessary for the true order of the hierarchy (as they term it), or of ecclesiastical order, that one See should surpass the others in dignity and power, so as to be the head of the whole body? For this purpose, they refer to the office of high priest under the law, and the supreme jurisdiction which God appointed at Jerusalem.... Every one knows that the high priest was a type of Christ; now, the priesthood being transferred, that right must also be transferred. To whom, then, was it transferred? certainly not to the Pope, as he dares impudently to boast when he arrogates this title to himself, but to Christ, who, as he alone holds the office without vicar or successor, does not resign the honour to any other." (IV Ch 6 par 2).

St. Peter himself would never have received power over the Church: "Hence we are entitled to infer, that, by that expression of Christ, nothing more was given to Peter than to the others, or that the right which Peter had received he communicated equally to others. But not to argue to no purpose, we elsewhere have, from the lips of Christ himself, a clear exposition of what it is to bind and loose. It is just to retain and remit sins (John 10:23). The way of loosing and binding is explained throughout Scripture.... For Cyprian thus speaks: In the person of one man he gave the keys to all, that he might denote the unity of all; the rest, therefore, were the same that Peter was, being admitted to an equal participation of honour and power, but a beginning is made from unity that the Church of Christ may be shown to be one (Cyprian, de Simplic. Prælat.)." (IV Ch 6 par 3-4).

The argument is of a level that I would describe as unworthy of the rationalism of Calvin! He must have been aware of it, for the proposition is rectified later and a new argument, hardly more convincing in reality, is proposed to us: "But were I to concede to them what they ask with regard to Peter--viz. that he was the chief of the apostles, and surpassed the others in dignity--there is no ground for making a universal rule out of a special example, or wresting a single fact into a perpetual enactment, seeing that the two things are widely different. One was chief among the apostles, just because they were few in number. If one man presided over twelve, will it follow that one ought to preside over a hundred thousand? . Her only Head is Christ." (IV Ch 6 par 8-9).

Not only does Calvin judge the Papacy contrary to the Gospel, but he later accuses him of having added articles of faith to the Gospels. Yet the largest part of the Credo is largely anterior to the Roman supremacy, which merely followed the texts elaborated over the centuries in perfect harmony with the patriarchs of Constantinople.

“Then the reason to which we ought here to have regard is universal: God deprives man of the power of producing any new doctrine, in order that he alone may be our master in spiritual teaching, as he alone is true, and can neither lie nor deceive. This reason applies not less to the whole Church than to every individual believer.” (IV Ch 8 par 9).

Can it be or not a new article of faith? Certainly it is not for man to produce them, but can the Holy Spirit inspire the successors of the Apostles? St. Paul himself received the Holy Spirit after Pentecost where he was not obviously. It is therefore that the action of the Holy Spirit can extend beyond the first eleven apostles and reveal articles of Faith as those which have been revealed to St. Paul and of which it can not be said that they do not go beyond the revelations received by the eleven apostles in confirmation of the words of Christ. As to the unworthiness of the Church as a human being, the apostles and St. Paul were they pure of any sin? St. Paul himself confesses his sins which did not prevent him from receiving the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

The revelation could not concern new articles, but only allow us to better understand the immutable articles sealed in the Gospels. Calvinism is therefore like Judaism and Islam, a religion of the Book. Everything would have been permanently frozen by Jesus of Nazareth and nothing could be added or subtracted. Most of the articles of the Credo were written very early after the death of Christ, without the papacy ever being involved in it. The only possibility after Calvin is that of the Muslims, to comment on the Book to enlighten the faithful: “I simply hold what is true--viz. that the Lord is always present with his people, and guides them by his Spirit. Christ gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ”?

(Eph. 4:11, 14, 15)...But if this guardianship consists in the ministry of the Prophets and Apostles, it follows, that the whole depends upon this-
-viz. that the word of the Lord is faithfully preserved and maintained in purity" (IV Ch 8 par 11-12). Imams must be trained according to these same principles.

It will readily be admitted that a man alone, even at the highest level, can scarcely avail himself of holding the truth and imposing new rules on his own. There are councils for that. Calvin readily admitted the validity of the very first councils: "Thus those ancient Councils of Nice, Constantinople, the first of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and the like, which were held for refuting errors," (IV Ch 9 par 8). Of course, Calvin had a justification to make Michel Servetus burn alive.

Thereafter, the second Council of Nicaea in 787 restored the images in the Churches, an inexcusable crime in the eyes of Calvin: "It is an unspeakable abomination to see images in a Christian temple." (IV Ch 9 par 9). All the councils which followed this abomination are worthless in his eyes.

Then Calvin attacks the temporal power of the Church, whereas this power should only be under the control of the State, for the Church, the true and not that of the papacy, "For the Church has not the right of the sword to punish or restrain, has no power to coerce, no prison nor other punishments which the magistrate is wont to inflict." (IV Ch 11 par 3).

Calvin's essential argument in his critique of the institutions of the Catholic Church rests on freedom of conscience. The Church deprives the faithful of their freedom of conscience: "For the thing required of us is not (as they maliciously pretend) to endure some grievous oppression in our body, but to be tortured in our consciences, and brought into bondage: in other words, robbed of the benefits of Christ's blood." (IV Ch 10 par 23).

I believe, however, that Bishop Cauchon condemned Jeanne-d'Arc for sorcery, but that it was the civil force, following the judgment of the Church, that condemned her to death and burned alive and not the Church. But the real problem is not there. One learns from the words of Calvin that men have freedom of conscience since the Church could take it away from them. So there would be a Freewill? Where is the predestination?

It is true, however, that the Catholic Church, as well as Orthodox, has been led to exercise powers of civil order. The Great Invasions in the West, both in the Latin and Slavonic countries, in the Middle East and in North Africa, have ruined the existing institutions. Some, like hospitals and schools, dated from the Greeks. These were activities of solidarity close enough to charity. The Church had to take over all these activities abandoned by the new States. This explains why, until the sixteenth century, doctors were clerks and the entire educational system, since the beginnings until the university, was managed by the Church. On the legal plan, which does not enter my skills, I think that the Church had to so inevitably administer justice. But it was a field where the royal authority had to quickly take things in hand. In tribal societies, justice has always been exercised by the chief. Calvin's criticism is profoundly indecent. That things had to be brought to change certainly, but to make the Catholic Church responsible for it is shame on the historical level, a stupidity on the practical level, an infamy on the moral level.

Calvin, of course, reserves the right, as we have seen, to judge and condemn those whom he regards as heretical: "Moreover, lest any one should despise the judgment of the Church, or count it a small matter to be condemned by the suffrages of the faithful, the Lord has declared that it is nothing else than the promulgation of his own sentence, and that that which they do on earth is ratified in heaven. For they act by the word of the Lord in condemning the perverse, and by the word of the

Lord in taking the penitent back into favour (John 20:23).” (IV Ch 12 par 4).

By placing the Old and New Testaments on the same level, Calvin is led to consider collective sin. Progressives have not gone so far, although the question could be asked. The proletariat is doomed to collective salvation? The bourgeoisie with Gehenna? It would not be a great semantic escalation to attribute this thought to Progressives! But for Calvin, it is a certainty. Wars and epidemics are divine punishments: “For it sometimes happens that God smites a nation with war or pestilence, or some kind of calamity. In this common chastisement it behoves the whole people to plead guilty, and confess their guilt.... On the other hand, when pestilence begins to stalk abroad, or famine or war, or when any other disaster seems to impend over a province and people (Esther 4:16), then also it is the duty of pastors to exhort the Church to fasting, that she may suppliantly deprecate the Lord's anger.” (IV Ch 12 par 15, 17). But of course the fasts and prayers of the papists can not have any effect: “But I am unwilling to waste many words on a subject as to which there can be no doubt. All I say is, that, as well in fasts as in all other parts of discipline, the Papists are so far from having anything right, anything sincere, anything duly framed and ordered, that they have no occasion to plume themselves as if anything was left them that is worthy of praise.” (IV Ch 12 par 21).

And the worst of the perversions is to forbid the marriage of the priests, which is actually not specific to the Catholic Church: “In one thing they are more than rigid and inexorable--in not permitting priests to marry. It is of no consequence to mention with what impunity whoredom prevails among them, and how, trusting to their vile celibacy, they have become callous to all kinds of iniquity. The prohibition, however, clearly shows how pestiferous all traditions are, since this one has not only deprived the Church of fit and honest pastors, but has introduced a fearful sink of iniquity, and plunged many souls into the gulf of despair. Certainly,

when marriage was interdicted to priests, it was done with impious tyranny, not only contrary to the word of God, but contrary to all justice. First, men had no title whatever to forbid what God had left free; secondly, it is too clear to make it necessary to give any lengthened proof that God has expressly provided in his Word that this liberty shall not be infringed. I omit Paul's injunction, in numerous passages, that a bishop be the husband of one wife; but what could be stronger than his declaration, that in the latter days there would be impious men forbidding to marry? (1 Tim. 4:3) Such persons he calls not only impostors, but devils. We have therefore a prophecy, a sacred oracle of the Holy Spirit, intended to warn the Church from the outset against perils, and declaring that the prohibition of marriage is a doctrine of devils." (IV Ch 12 par 21) "But the meaning of what we have said as to not despising our liberty may occasion some difficulty if not explained. Wherefore, understand it briefly thus: Since God has given us dominion over all things, and so subjected them to us that we may use them for our convenience, we cannot hope that our service will be acceptable to God if we bring ourselves into bondage to external things, which ought to be subservient to us. I say this, because some aspire to the praise of humility, for entangling themselves in a variety of observances from which God for good reason wished us to be entirely free. Hence, if we would escape this danger, let us always remember that we are by no means to withdraw from the economy which God has appointed in the Christian Church" (IV Ch 13 par 4). "Augustine, while tracing out a holy and legitimate monasticism, would keep away all rigorous exaction of those things which the word of the Lord has left free. But in the present day nothing is more rigorously exacted. For they deem it an inexpiable crime if any one deviates in the least degree from the prescribed form in colour or species of dress, in the kind of food, or in other frivolous and frigid ceremonies." (IV Ch 13 par 10).

This will be much later the leitmotif of the Progressives which led in the early 1960s to a headlong flight of nuns and monks to civil life. The

number of unfrocked priests and nuns in miniskirts was not counted. Now, it is a vision that belongs to the supremacy given by the Progressives and first by Calvin, to the second commandment. To want only to love his neighbor, more precisely for the Progressives to help one's neighbor, is relegating the first commandment to oblivion. God loves that men love Him. All the small gestures mentioned by Calvin do not really have any value in themselves. Besides, if we reason humanly, we may think that the immensity of God has no need of them. But to stop at this human logic is precisely the Progressive heresy. The value of these gestures is really to make us think of God. They help us to love God.

One can not reproach Calvin for not having understood what was happening before his eyes. It took a long time to measure the impact of printing on the economy. Even today, content owners like publishers have not understood the impact of digital. Some precursors not came out unscathed, it is true. Until the invention of printing, the most remunerative activity of the abbeys was the copy of the manuscripts. There was a large organization of recruitment in the villages of children without fortune, but capable of studying. They were paid by the Church, but the child in care gave his life to the Church and the abbeys in particular.

This system was not stopped after the invention of Gutenberg. Abbeys lost their greatest source of income. They were entrusted with the sale of indulgences, among others, to subsist. But there were bitter disputes between abbeys, and in particular Luther was sent to Rome to plead the cause of his abbey of the Augustinians of Erfurt. He was scandalized, but not by the way of life of the cardinals, as the atheistic historians believe, stupidly additionally, for they know very well that there was then a general liberty of way of life. He was scandalized because the immense and sumptuous St. Peter's Basilica in Rome was being built with the levies on the tithes and the revenues of the Church, while the

monks were positively starving in their convent. This upheaval was obviously accompanied by human problems. The worst for a man is to remain unoccupied. If Calvin was right in pointing out these problems, he obviously totally ignored the cause. To reject the fault on the papacy is a monstrous historical contradiction, as for the rest actually: "Augustine strenuously contends that it is not lawful for monks to live in idleness on other men's means. (August. De Oper. Monach.) He denies that any such example was to be found in his day in a well-regulated monastery. Our monks place the principal part of their holiness in idleness. For if you take away their idleness, where will that contemplative life by which they glory that they excel all others, and make a near approach to the angels? Augustine, in fine, requires a monasticism which may be nothing else than a training and assistant to the offices of piety which are recommended to all Christians." (IV Ch 13 par 10).

The theological aspects of the doctrine of Calvin properly constitute an heresy. But on the practical level, his denial of the sacraments, apart from baptism, characterizes the Protestant vision. Instead of following the order of Calvin in his Institution of the Christian religion, I will take the order of criticality, if I may say so.

The Baptism

Baptism presents no particular problems, especially as Calvin advocates the baptism of children at an early age: "To this error, in ancient times, it was owing that some refused to be initiated by baptism until their life was in extreme danger, and they were drawing their last breath, that they might thus obtain pardon for all the past." (IV Ch 15 par 3). "pædobaptism. its accordance with the institution of christ, and the nature of the sign" (Titke IV Ch 16). However, Calvin rejects the signs added to the baptism itself: "There was afterwards added the taper and chrism, while exorcism was thought to open the door for baptism.

Though I am not unaware how ancient the origin of this adventitious farrago is, still it is lawful for me and all the godly to reject whatever men have presumed to add to the institution of Christ." (IV Ch 15 par 10). As for the children who died before being baptized, it is a little embarrassing for Calvin that St. Augustine promised them to hell. Pope Benedict XVI initiated the process which led to renounce much more than this Augustan dramatization, which was already done, but especially to any restriction on the salvation of these children in the name of the divine mercy and the attitude of Jesus Of Nazareth with regard to children.

The confession

There can be no doubt that the Gospels contain the institution of confession and in several places. But for Calvin it is not a sacrament in the sense in which he hears it: "We may also define more briefly by calling it a testimony of the divine favour toward us, confirmed by an external sign, with a corresponding attestation of our faith towards Him. You may make your choice of these definitions, which in meaning differ not from that of Augustine, which defines a sacrament to be a visible sign of a sacred thing, or a visible form of an invisible grace, but does not contain a better or surer explanation." (IV Ch 14 par 1). It's a word problem. Pascal said what to think about it.

The problem since the beginning of Christendom was to define the means of exercising this sacrament. Calvin rejects only auricular confession: "If auricular confession was a divine law, how could Nectarius have dared to abolish or remodel it? Nectarius, a holy man of God, approved by the suffrage of all antiquity, will they charge with heresy and schism?" (IV Ch 4 par 7). "It is not strange, therefore, that we condemn that auricular confession, as a thing pestilent in its nature, and in many ways injurious to the Church, and desire to see it abolished. But if the thing were in itself indifferent, yet, seeing it is of no use or benefit,

and has given occasion to so much impiety, blasphemy, and error, who does not think that it ought to be immediately abolished?" (IV Ch 4 par 19). "I will not pollute my page by retailing the monstrous abominations with which auricular confession teems" (IV Ch 4 par 19). "I have elsewhere shown (Book 3 chap. 4 sec. 4-7) how cruel murder they commit by their doctrine of auricular confession." (IV Ch 4 par 19). "But that Contrition of the Sophists, and auricular Confession (as they call it), and the Satisfaction of actual performance, are opposed to the free forgiveness of sins." (IV Ch 20 par 48). We will note in passing, the return to the perception of the Old Testament with the collective faults that even the progressives will not dare to resume. For the rest, the exercise of confession remains an open question.

The Last Supper or Eucharist

In all rigor Calvin recognizes only two sacraments baptism and the Last Supper. This is where a chasm really opens. We must again say that Calvin wants to ignore entirely that the Orthodox have the same position as the Catholic Church, especially on the Real Presence. It is therefore absurd to accuse the papacy of having invented an Eucharist. Calvin's virulent criticism of the papacy about the Eucharist comes up against an insurmountable problem. The Catholic Church would have misinterpreted the Gospels. Now all the Orthodoxes have the same interpretation. The cornerstone of Calvin's argument on the substance is rationalist and even scientific. The real presence would be nonsense, for the bread of the host does not become human flesh, nor the wine of human blood. They would remain what they are: bread and wine, and the Last Supper, the Eucharist, would be only a symbol. "And, first, we are not to dream of such a presence of Christ in the sacrament as the artificers of the Romish court have imagined, as if the body of Christ, locally present, were to be taken into the hand, and chewed by the teeth, and swallowed by the throat. This was the form of Palinode, which Pope Nicholas dictated to Berengarius, in token of his repentance, a form

expressed in terms so monstrous, that the author of the Gloss exclaims, that there is danger, if the reader is not particularly cautious, that he will be led by it into a worse heresy than was that of Berengarius (Distinct. 2 c. Ego Berengarius)." (IV Ch 17 par 12). " Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 8:9-11), shows that the only way in which Christ dwells in us is by his Spirit. By this, however, he does not take away that communion of flesh and blood of which we now speak, but shows that it is owing to the Spirit alone that we possess Christ wholly, and have him abiding in us." (IV Ch 17 par 12).

But the rejection of the real presence on rationalist arguments is nonsense, for mystery is precisely what escapes rationalism. One might argue that rationalism rejects any form of mystery. This is the great scientific illusion of the past two centuries. The drama of the rationalism, and far worse of the scientific vision, is to ignore the fact that any statement is poisoned by a priori. Scientific postulates are only subjective convictions, even if they enter into a coherent-looking paradigm. The mysteries are for the theology what the postulates are for the science. There is, however, a difference: the postulates are ephemeral and always end up in the dustbin of history, whereas the mysteries of theology, having no experimental foundation, are not subject to questioning. They last as much as the faith they support. One can also give a scientific answer to Calvin: the real presence is related to the meaning of the word "real". What is real? What is existence? Scientists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sought existence in a particle. This is the subject of another book. To sum up, I would say that existence is a concept of the mind whose reality is undoubted, but whose physical form in the experimental world is inaccessible to us. We can therefore say, from this point of view, that the real presence is not paradoxical. The same is true for the resurrection of bodies. Everything flows, the atoms that constitute us have certainly not always existed, and they will no longer exist in a form identical to that they had the previous moment. So that the question of the nature of the resurrected bodies is

raised from the sole point of physics. Since there can be no doubt that there is something that exists, we must think that what exists in the resurrected bodies is what exists essentially in existence.

“The Schoolmen, horrified at this barbarous impiety, speak more modestly, though they do nothing more than amuse themselves with more subtle delusions. They admit that Christ is not contained in the sacrament circumscriptively, or in a bodily manner, but they afterwards devise a method which they themselves do not understand, and cannot explain to others. It, however, comes to this, that Christ may be sought in what they call the species of bread. What? When they say that the substance of bread is converted into Christ, do they not attach him to the white colour, which is all they leave of it? But they say, that though contained in the sacrament, he still remains in heaven, and has no other presence there than that of abode. But, whatever be the terms in which they attempt to make a gloss, the sum of all is, that that which was formerly bread, by consecration becomes Christ: so that Christ thereafter lies hid under the colour of bread. This they are not ashamed distinctly to express.” (IV Ch 17 par 13). “For the first architects of local presence could not explain, how the body of Christ could be mixed with the substance of bread, without forthwith meeting with many absurdities. Hence it was necessary to have recourse to the fiction, that there is a conversion of the bread into body, not that properly instead of bread it becomes body, but that Christ, in order to conceal himself under the figure, reduces the substance to nothing. I admit, indeed, that some of the ancients occasionally used the term conversion, not that they meant to do away with the substance in the external signs, but to teach that the bread devoted to the sacrament was widely different from ordinary bread, and was now something else” (IV Ch 17 par 14).

The Eucharist being the essential element of the Mass, Calvin has not enough hard words against the Catholic Mass: “let my readers understand that I am here combating that opinion with which the

Roman Antichrist and his prophets have imbued the whole world-- viz. that the mass is a work by which the priest who offers Christ, and the others who in the oblation receive him, gain merit with God, or that it is an expiatory victim by which they regain the favour of God.... But Christ being immortal, had not the least occasion to have a vicar substituted for him. Wherefore he was appointed by his Father a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek, that he might eternally exercise a permanent priesthood....For Christ did not offer himself once, in the view that his sacrifice should be daily ratified by new oblations, but that by the preaching of the Gospel and the dispensation of the sacred Supper, the benefit of it should be communicated to us" (IV Ch 18 par 1,3).

The other sacraments were only inventions, of which Calvin agrees, however, that some are very ancient: "The above discourse concerning the sacraments might have the effect, among the docile and sober-minded, of preventing them from indulging their curiosity, or from embracing, without authority from the word, any other sacraments than those two, which they know to have been instituted by the Lord. But since the idea of seven sacraments, almost common in the mouths of all, and circulated in all schools and sermons, by mere antiquity, has struck its roots." (IV Ch 19 par 1).

Confirmation

Confirmation is a very ancient sacrament: "It was anciently customary for the children of Christians, after they had grown up, to appear before the bishop to fulfil that duty which was required of such adults as presented themselves for baptism. These sat among the catechumens until they were duly instructed in the mysteries of the faith, and could make a confession of it before bishop and people. The infants, therefore, who had been initiated by baptism, not having then given a confession of faith to the Church, were again, toward the end of their boyhood, or

on adolescence, brought forward by their parents, and were examined by the bishop in terms of the Catechism which was then in common use. In order that this act, which otherwise justly required to be grave and holy, might have more reverence and dignity, the ceremony of laying on of hands was also used. Thus the boy, on his faith being approved, was dismissed with a solemn blessing. Ancient writers often make mention of this custom. Pope Leo says (Ep. 39), If any one returns from heretics, let him not be baptised again, but let that which was there wanting to him--viz. the virtue of the Spirit, be conferred by the laying on of the hands of the bishop. Our opponents will here exclaim, that the name of sacrament is justly given to that by which the Holy Spirit is conferred. But Leo elsewhere explains what he means by these words (Ep. 77); Let not him who was baptised by heretics be rebaptised, but be confirmed by the laying on of hands with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, because he received only the form of baptism without sanctification. Jerome also mentions it (Contra Luciferian). Now though I deny not that Jerome is somewhat under delusion when he says that the observance is apostolical, he is, however, very far from the follies of these men This confirmation is performed by unction, and the following form of words: "I sign thee with the sign of the holy cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. All fair and venerable. But where is the word of God which promises the presence of the Holy Spirit here? Not one iota can they allege" (IV Ch 19 par 4-5). "How will they assure us that their chrism is a vehicle of the Holy Spirit? We see oil, that is, a thick and greasy liquid, but nothing more. Let the word be added to the element, says Augustine, and it will become a sacrament... Did this ministry, which the apostles then performed, still remain in the Church, it would also behove us to observe the laying on of hands: but since that gift has ceased to be conferred, to what end is the laying on of hands? Assuredly the Holy Spirit is still present with the people of God; without his guidance and direction the Church of God cannot subsist." (IV Ch 19 par 5-6). "Oil for the belly, and the belly for oil, but the Lord will destroy

both. For all these weak elements, which perish even in the using, have nothing to do with the kingdom of God, which is spiritual, and will never perish. ... Paul's declaration applies, meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it... But let us make a still closer inspection, and see how many monsters this greasy oil fosters and nourishes. Those anointers say that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism for righteousness, and in confirmation, for increase of grace, that in baptism we are regenerated for life, and in confirmation, equipped for contest. And, accordingly, they are not ashamed to deny that baptism can be duly completed without confirmation. How nefarious! Are we not, then, buried with Christ by baptism, and made partakers of his death, that we may also be partners of his resurrection?" (IV Ch 19 par 7-8).

The Extreme Unction

Calvin uses the same argument to reject this sacrament as for confirmation: "The third fictitious sacrament is Extreme Unction, which is performed only by a priest, and, as they express it, in extremis, with oil consecrated by the bishop, and with this form of words, By this holy unction, and his most tender mercy, may God forgive you whatever sin you have committed, by the eye, the ear, the smell, the touch, the taste (see Calv. Epist. de Fugiend. Illicit. Sac.). They pretend that there are two virtues in it--the forgiveness of sins, and relief of bodily disease, if so expedient; if not expedient, the salvation of the soul. For they say, that the institution was set down by James, whose words are, Is any sick among you? let him send for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (James 5:14). The same account is here to be given of this unction as we lately gave of the laying on of hands; in other words, it is mere hypocritical stage-play, by which,

without reason or result, they would resemble the apostles." (IV Ch 19 par 18).

Ecclesiastical Orders

"The fourth place in their catalogue is held by the sacrament of Orders, one so prolific, as to beget of itself seven lesser sacraments Doorkeepers, Readers, Exorcists, Acolytes, Subdeacons, Deacons, and Priests." (IV Ch 19 par 22).

I will pass on the long diatribe on the actual number of sacraments that result from the complexity of the sacrament of order. Pascal has sufficiently said what it was to be thought of quarrels of words. In the same way, I shall pass over the tonsure which seems to create many difficulties for Calvin. It is no longer practiced except very symbolically among the traditionalists. The external signs, more or less justified, belong to the fashions of the period. They are not unimportant, quite the contrary. The signs are like road signs: they remind us of our faith. But their very form is really not worthy of such controversy. The following text is more serious and Calvin resumes his thesis on the nature of the sacraments to reject this one: "But to have done at once, we may conclude the same of this as of the others, and there is no need to repeat at length what has been explained above. To the modest and docile (it is such I have undertaken to instruct), it will be enough that there is no sacrament of God, unless where a ceremony is shown annexed to a promise, or rather where a promise is seen in a ceremony. Here there is not one syllable of a certain promise, and it is vain, therefore, to seek for a ceremony to confirm the promise. On the other hand, we read of no ceremony appointed by God in regard to those usages which they employ, and, therefore, there can be no sacrament." (IV Ch 19 par 33).

But what most shocks Calvin, like Luther, is the celibacy of the priests: "Though this is diametrically opposed to the institution of Christ (Mt.

26:26), they will have it to be regarded as his interpretation. Paul terms the prohibition of marriage a doctrine of devils (1 Tim. 4:1, 3); and the Spirit elsewhere declares that marriage is honourable in all (Heb. 13:4).” (IV Ch 9 par 14).

All Protestant pastors can marry. Among the Orthodox the popes can no longer marry after their ordination, but the bishops must be unmarried. Many are therefore monks, single of course. Young people get married before entering the seminary. The Catholic rule is such that the number of vocations is in free fall. One can allege the harmful influence of the consumer society. It will not give more vocations. For 50 years we have heard nothing but lamentations, and nothing has changed. And besides, nothing will change, because this consumer society is only a step in the improvement of the standard of living of the men, inscribed in our genes we could say. But besides the priests, we see multiplying the married deacons. When it will really be a lack of priests, the acts devolved to the deacons will naturally be extended by giving them an adequate order.

Marriage

“The last of all is marriage, which, while all admit it to be an institution of God, no man ever saw to be a sacrament, until the time of Gregory. And would it ever have occurred to the mind of any sober man? It is a good and holy ordinance of God. And agriculture, architecture, shoemaking, and shaving, are lawful ordinances of God; but they are not sacraments. For in a sacrament, the thing required is not only that it be a work of God, but that it be an external ceremony appointed by God to confirm a promise. That there is nothing of the kind in marriage, even children can judge. But it is a sign, they say, of a sacred thing, that is, of the spiritual union of Christ with the Church.... All the parables and similitudes in Scripture will be so many sacraments. Nay, even theft will be a sacrament, seeing it is written, The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2).” (IV Ch 19 par 34).

I am afraid that Calvin will have let himself go to a low polemic, to a semantic debate. First, marriage is neither a trade nor an activity: it is a union of two human beings. In addition “Moreover, when spouses are made aware that their union is blessed by the Lord” (II Ch 8 par 44) as Calvin recalled at the very beginning of his Institution of the Christian religion. Calvin's true argument is the same as for the other sacraments. The grace of the Holy Spirit is not invoked on this occasion by the Scriptures: “There is also another absurdity in these dogmas. They affirm that in a sacrament the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred; this connection they hold to be a sacrament, and yet they deny that in it the Holy Spirit is ever present.” (IV Ch 19 par 37).

The evangelical references to human marriage are too explicit for Calvin to systematically assimilate it to the spiritual union of Jesus Christ with his Church: “For he meant not to refer to the sense in which Adam used the words, but sets forth, under the figure and similitude of marriage, the sacred union which makes us one with Christ. His words have this meaning; for reminding us that he is speaking of Christ and the Church, he, by way of correction, distinguishes between the marriage tie and the spiritual union of Christ with his Church” (II Ch 12 par 7). “Add, that our Saviour's exposition would have been harsh and grovelling, had he confined himself to the literal meaning. He was not referring to the mystical union with which he has honoured the Church, but only to conjugal fidelity, and states, that the reason why God declared man and wife to be one flesh, was to prevent any one from violating that indissoluble tie by divorce.” (II Ch 12 par 7).

The problem of the indissolubility of marriage was self-evident at the time.

They come to an arrangement within the family. Calvin did not take a position on this very current problem. There can be no doubt that he

would have taken a position against an absolute interpretation of the Gospels. The Council of Trent legislated on this question without really settling the question: "If anyone says that the Church is mistaken in asking the innocent husband not to remarry, let him be anathema." When mention is made of the passage of St. Matthew, the following are most often omitted: "Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason? Haven't you read, he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. Why then, they asked, did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away? Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." (Mt 19: 3-9 the corresponding passage in Mark is almost identical Mk 10: 1-2-12, without mentioning the case of adultery). But the following text given by St. Matthew gives a much more human light: "The disciples said to him, If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry. Jesus replied, Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." (Mt 19,10-12). Eunuchs, more generally, are now translated as singles, either because they can not marry by birth, or because they do not want to. It is, moreover, this advice to the apostles not to marry for the kingdom of heaven which is a justification for the celibacy of priests. As always the literal reading of the words of Jesus of Nazareth leads to an absolute view in opposition to the commandment of Love. It should be noted that Jesus of Nazareth justified the possibility given by Moses to repudiation

by the hardness of your heart. On the one hand, are we really more gentle and humble of heart than the contemporaries of Moses? But, on the other hand, Jesus of Nazareth declared that he had not come to change the law, but to fulfill it, through his message of Love. The fundamentalist interpretation of the law leads both to an initiative changing the law of Moses, but above all to a breach of charity. For the problem that arises is not the divorce or the mere separation of the spouses, but the exclusions of the divorced remarried. One could thus live without difficulty in concubinage, but especially not to remarry, moreover civilly, since there is not even question of religious remarriage. This is an attitude contrary to righteousness and a total lack of charity. Cohabitation excludes the reciprocal rights of the married couple. It is also nonsense, for civil marriage has no theological value.

The Orthodox rely on the exception given by St. Matthew to accept certain cases of divorces. The Protestants have all renounced the slightest rule in this field, contrary to the prescriptions of Calvin. We manage as we can with reality!

The end of Calvin's book concerns the government of States. These are general considerations which do not involve criticism of the papacy or of anyone else.

In passing, one will note this advice of sweetness to the judges of which Michel Servet has not benefited from the part of Calvin "provided always they eschew reckless and cruel asperity, and that tribunal which may be justly termed a rock on which the accused must founder.. For I am not one of those who would either favour an unseasonable severity, or think that any tribunal could be accounted just that is not presided over by mercy, that best and surest counsellor of kings, and, as Solomon declares, upholder of the throne (Prov. 20:28)." (IV Ch 20 par 10).

Calvin burned alive Michel Servet!